

Rolling Stone

Issue 1107 >> June 24, 2010 >> \$4.99
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**THE GULF
OIL SPILL**

**THE
SCANDAL
AT THE
HEART
OF THE
CRISIS**

By Tim Dickinson

**DAVE MATTHEWS
TOM PETTY
STING**

**SUMMER
TOUR
MELT-
DOWN**

**EMPTY
SEATS,
CANCELED
SHOWS**

**LCD
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**HOW
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**KING OF
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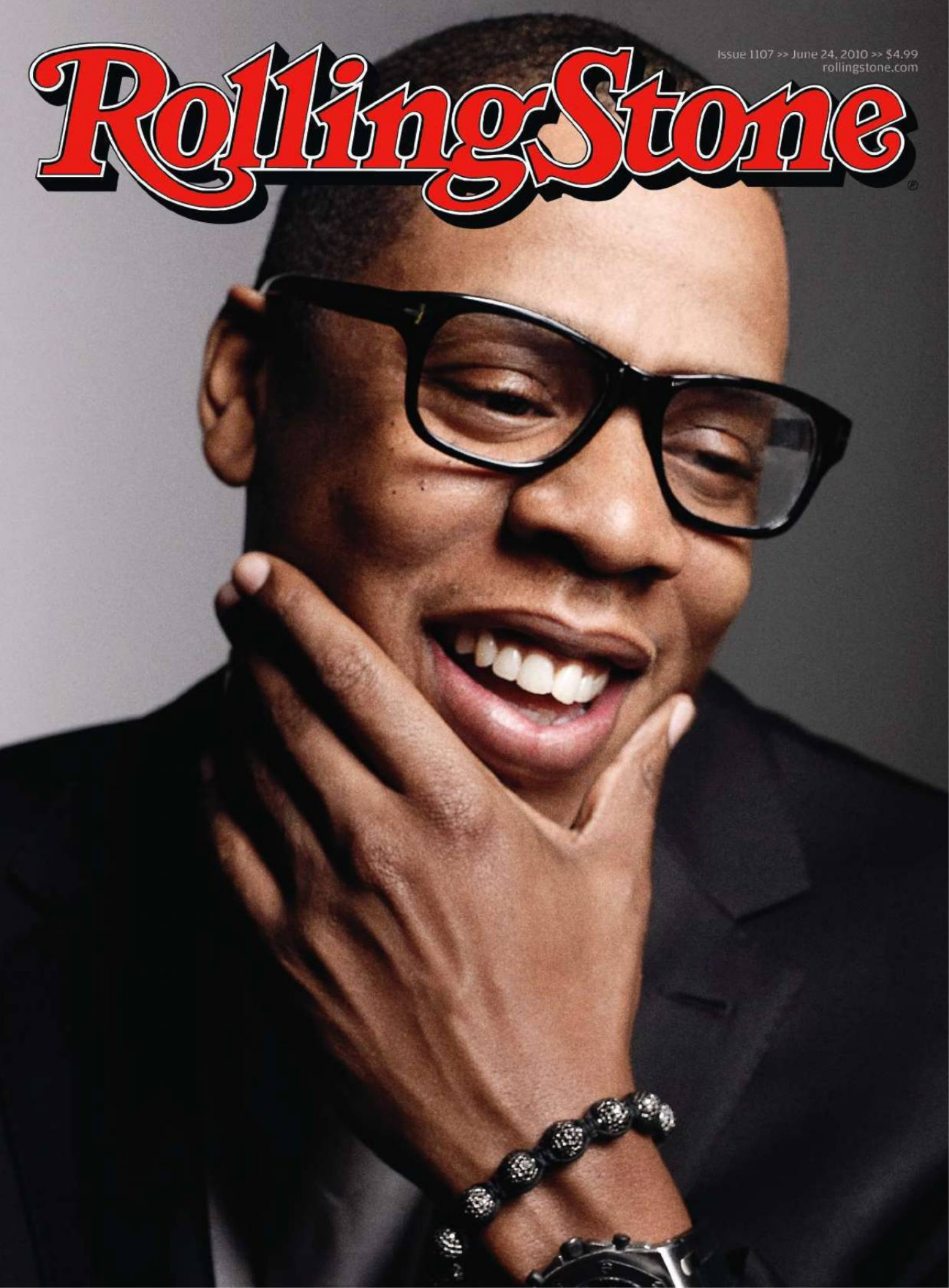




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THE MAN BEHIND THE BEAT

WHAT IS THE BLUES TO KEB' MO'?

The blues is life. It comes out of a life experience and is a deep expression of the south, Tennessee and the Mississippi Delta. All that comes forth in the show... that experience of music.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF MUSIC ON MEMPHIS BEAT?

To highlight the story; to take the story and to embellish it. It's meant to focus you so much that you don't even hear the music, you just feel it.

I see myself in a very supportive role. Yes the music is important, because it helps to define the story and it helps explain what's

going on in the storyline. But at the same time, I like the music to enhance yet stay out of the way. It should be like a frame of a great photograph. That's my goal.

IN YOUR OPINION, WHO IS MAIN CHARACTER DWIGHT?

Dwight's a regular guy, but he is a very instinctive person. He has a special ability to feel his way through solving a crime and listen to what his heart is telling him. He listens to a deeper rhythm as a police officer, so I'm hoping that the music lets you see that.

"I WANT MY PART TO REALLY COUNT..."

I want to listen to everyone else – listen to the actors, and listen to the producers – and then go back into my heart and soul and find music that's going to say what everyone is trying to say."

member of the band. He's the lead singer, the lead character, and I'm backing him up. I'm accompanying him in his song, in his story that he's telling. And that happens differently with each scene, with every experience and every moment.

HOW DO YOU KNOW WHEN THE SCORE IS PERFECT?

I like to watch the show in a room full of people because it's not necessarily what people say, but their physical reaction. In a sense, when we are all in the room, I can feel them. I can feel their energy, so what they tell me doesn't really matter

anymore. Instead, I take my personal connection to everyone in the room and connect to what they are feeling, and that's how I gauge whether it's working or not working. You can feel it. I really trust those feelings when I'm working.

**MEMPHIS BEAT
BEGINS
TUESDAY
JUNE 22**



My experience with Dwight has only begun. I think there is a lot more of Dwight to come for me and for the people who are going to be watching the show.

HOW ARE YOU GOING TO USE MUSIC TO DEVELOP DWIGHT'S CHARACTER? Well it's basically this: I listen, I watch, and I listen again. It's hard to put into words, but I listen to everything happening in a scene and it's like hearing a band. Dwight is a

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RS1107

"ALL THE NEWS THAT FITS"

Ozzy Works It

SHOCKING OZZY OSBOURNE fact: He has been a fitness freak since the days he was biting the heads off bats. "After a jog," says his wife, Sharon, "he'd drink 10 pints of beer and take drugs. But no matter how stoned out of his mind he was, he would still go on the StairMaster." With a new CD and a summer tour, Ozzy has been hitting the home gym hard. "I am addicted to exercising," says the now-sober 61-year-old. Even if his regimen hasn't quite delivered: "I started working out because I want to be slim, young and attractive forever," he says. "But it didn't work out. I'm not slim, I'm not young, I'm not attractive."



Ozzy Osbourne
outside his Los
Angeles home.
April 2010

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ON THE COVER Jay-Z photographed in New York on May 14th, 2010, by Mark Seliger.

Styling by June Ambrose for Mode Squad Inc. Jay-Z with sunglasses: Leather jacket by Rick Owens, T-shirt by Ralph Lauren, jewelry by Lazaro. Jay-Z with glasses: Blazer by Louis Vuitton, T-shirt by Calvin Klein, glasses by Tom Ford, jewelry by Lazaro, watch by Audemars Piguet.





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Live From Bonnaroo

Backstage, onstage and in the crowd with Dave Matthews Band, the Kings of Leon and Jay-Z at rock's biggest summer jam



EXCLUSIVE VIDEO

Russell Brand's Brushes With Death

Live at the RS offices: The *Get Him to the Greek* star remembers his closest calls.



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Brian Fallon



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Rock & Roll



CHRISTINA AGUILERA



U2



LIMP BIZKIT

Summer Tour Meltdown

Canceled tours, slow sales: Inside the worst season in a decade
By Steve Knopper

AFTER YEARS OF INCREASES in concert ticket prices, fans in a shaky economy have finally rebelled by staying home, creating what

concert-industry sources say is the worst summer season in more than a decade. Major stars from Christina Aguilera to the Eagles canceled amphitheater and stadium shows; artists catering to every type of audience are dealing with empty seats; and Live Nation Entertainment, the world's biggest con-

cert promoter, has discounted more than 700 top shows by up to 25 percent in a "No Service Fee June" promotion. "All the mistakes the industry made last year, we're paying for them this year," says Kevin Lyman, producer of the Warped Tour, which is dealing with a six percent sales drop compared to last

year. "I don't think we give the public any credit. They've figured us out. My heart's broken for my business."

The concert industry, in the view of Lyman and many others, is broken: To fill its 50 amphitheaters every summer, Live Nation—which merged with Ticketmaster earlier this year

ON THE ROAD 2010 We asked 1,176 RS readers their opinions about the concert biz

WHAT ARE YOUR LEAST FAVORITE THINGS ABOUT GOING TO CONCERTS?

35.3%
High ticket prices

24.9%
High service charges

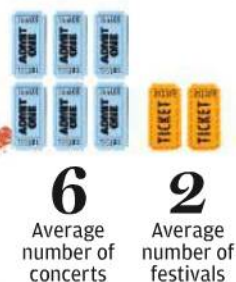
12.8%
Hard to get good seats

8.8%
Tickets sell out too fast

WHAT TOURS THIS YEAR ARE YOU MOST EXCITED ABOUT?



How many concerts/festivals do you plan to go to this year?



\$59 What you say is a fair price for an arena or amphitheater show
2009 AVERAGE TICKET PRICE: \$62.57*

\$148 What you say is a fair price for a three-day festival like Lollapalooza
LOLLAPALOOZA TICKET: \$215

\$155 The most you'd pay for an arena or amphitheater show
BON JOVI "DIAMOND CIRCLE" TICKET: \$1,875

to form one of the most powerful companies in the history of the music business – aggressively outbids rivals such as AEG Live, offering artists huge guaranteed payments and jacking up prices to cover the expenses. That worked fine in a healthy economy – ticket revenues jumped from \$1.5 billion in 1999 to \$4.6 billion last year, according to *Pollstar* – but late last summer, fans stopped showing up, forcing the promoter to slash prices for nearly 1 million tickets with last-minute two-for-one and no-service-charge deals. This summer, a wide variety of tours are struggling, from teen pop (Jonas Brothers), classic rock (Tom Petty) and pop (Rihanna) to package tours (Lilith Fair). Describing this summer's concert sales, several sources use the word “disastrous.”

Artists who raised ticket prices this summer, particularly the Jonas Brothers, Petty and Aguilera, have been punished at the box office. Aguilera, whose new single “Not Myself Tonight” failed to take off at radio, canceled her entire 20-city tour after charging \$155 for a top ticket, compared to about \$87 in 2007. Artists have also compensated for lost CD revenues by touring more frequently: The Eagles booked East Coast stadiums with the Dixie Chicks and Keith Urban just a year after playing arenas in the same cities, and have canceled shows in Washington, D.C., Philadelphia and Hershey, Pennsylvania. Limp Bizkit scrapped their summer tour just before it went on sale, complaining that the promoter forced the band into amphitheaters when arenas with mosh pits were a better fit. “Just because you own all the amphitheaters doesn’t mean you can make us play the amphitheaters,” frontman Fred Durst tells *ROLLING STONE*. (Sources say the tour was canceled due to lack of demand.)

At least some tours are thriving. Lady Gaga stands to be the year’s biggest, with a spectacular show and tickets that average \$92. “Nowadays we can’t take anything for granted,” says Troy Carter, Gaga’s manager. “You can’t launch a tour off a soft album.” Roger Waters, performing *The Wall*

Hot Tours in a Tough Economy

From Gaga’s spectacular to Bieber’s breakthrough, summer’s successes:



Lady Gaga

Despite enormous demand – and sky-high production costs for her elaborate show – Gaga’s average ticket price is a reasonable \$92.



Dave Matthews Band

By keeping prices low (\$40 to \$75 this summer), DMB made more cash on the road than any other band in the past decade.



James Taylor/Carole King

Touring together for the first time since the 1970s, the singer-songwriters are selling out multiple arena nights nationwide.



Justin Bieber

Bieber charges \$55 – considerably less than the increasingly long-in-the-tooth Jo Bros, who are struggling at \$95 a pop.

for the first time in decades, is selling so well that Live Nation added dates in numerous markets. Paul McCartney has been selling out stadiums and arenas worldwide. James Taylor and Carole King created demand after they first reunited for small shows in 2007 by put-

“My heart’s broken for my business,” says Warped Tour promoter Lyman.

ting out a strong live album and broadening to arenas this summer. And Jack Johnson and the Dave Matthews Band are perennials who maintain low prices. “We keep our ticket prices fair,” says Emmett Malloy, manager of Johnson, who charges \$55 for top seats and donates all profits to charity. “And I certainly see out there a lot of pretty high ticket prices.”

In early June, Live Nation broadened its 2009 discount plan, eliminating service charges to shows by more than 100 of its amphitheater acts, including Green Day, Dave Matthews Band, Jimmy Buffett and Phish. (Live Nation declined to comment for this story.)

The problem with the last-minute-discount strategy is that it rewards fans who wait – and punishes those who buy tickets when they go on sale. When Live Nation announced the deal, Lilith Fair message boards lit up with fans who felt ripped off. “If you happened to not have your tickets, that’s wonderful for you,” says Hanna O’Neill, 28, a Michigan State University graduate student who paid \$128 for four Lilith lawn seats in Clarkston, Michigan, only to discover she could have later saved \$40. “But those of us who bought tickets early, we kind of got hosed.” Adds Dennis Arfa, booking agent for

Metallica and Billy Joel, “It’s become the circus – get into the building for free, or cheap, and buy merchandise.”

Live Nation reported attendance was down three percent during the first quarter of this year, which in part led to a business loss of \$112 million. Then U2, who grossed \$200 million this year and were on their way to having one of the top-selling tours of all time, abruptly postponed their 16 North American dates until next year due to Bono’s emergency back surgery in Munich. Although some sources close to the company say it knows better than to panic during one bad summer, an increasing number of critics argue the company is making inexplicable desperation moves – like overbidding for the American Idols Live Tour after a weak TV season. “There’s grave concern,” says one source. “The mood’s grim. Just a lot of bad buying.”

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1 Eminem

"Won't Back Down" leak

Marshall must've been hanging with Taye Diggs - 'cause he got his groove back like Stella on this swaggering showcase for his still-staggering skills. "I don't need the fucking swine flu to be a sick pig," he raps over a ripping, rock-tinged track that kinda sounds like the Allmans' "Whipping Post."



5 Phosphorescent

Here's to Taking It Easy

If that bandanna-wearing dog that rides in the back of your hippie cousin's pickup could make an album, it would sound like the latest disc from this Brooklyn crew - a shaggy, mellow stumble through Flying Burrito Brothers-style Americana.



2 Big Boi

"Shutter-bugg" video

Costume changes! A puppet backing band! *Tron* outfits! Booty girls! The rap-y half of OutKast returns with a Zapp-inspired electro-funk cut - and a cornea-melting video that makes Courtney Love's tweets seem coherent.



3 Arcade Fire

"The Suburbs"

Not since Rush's "Subdivisions" has a Canadian band so precisely nailed suburban ennui - and Arcade Fire manage to do it in only one time signature. The indie saviors' first song in three years is surprisingly restrained - you can't even hear the fourth sousaphonist.



4 Rihanna

"Rockstar 101" video

While watching this video, we were all, "Whoa, Slash is looking fine!" Then it turned out to be RiRi in a hat. Yo, Slash: Ignore those late-night sexts.



Jack Johnson's L.A. Beach Party

Singer celebrates new LP with free Santa Monica gig; preps massive summer tour

JACK JOHNSON WASN'T planning to release an album this year, and with good reason. His father died of cancer last August and just a month later, Johnson, 35, and his wife, Kim, had their third child (a girl). "But all these songs just came out," Johnson says. "It felt like it was time."

Johnson's sixth album, *To the Sea*, is a tribute to his dad, surfer Jeff Johnson, from the grief-stricken cut "No Good With Faces" to the title track, about a father and son heading to the ocean to say goodbye. "That song's a meditation about going back to where I put my dad after he passed, by the water," says Johnson. "It's the closest thing I have to a church, and it's where I go to visit him." Even the album cover is a photograph of Jeff, building a sculpture of a wave when he was 20. "He was on my mind pretty much every song," Johnson says.

On a stage wedged in between the roller coaster and the vintage carousel, Johnson and his band celebrated the release of his new record with a free concert at the Santa Monica Pier on May 24th, drawing a crowd of 10,000 peo-

ple. Despite the cold weather that made Johnson's hands feel like "two blocks of ice," the show nimbly covered new and old material, plus Steve Miller Band's "The Joker."

It was a typically generous move from Johnson, who has used his multiplatinum success to support causes he cares about. "Joseph Campbell talks about the notion of joyful participation," Johnson says. "It's easy to get overwhelmed to the point of depression about the state

"It's easy to get overwhelmed about the world – but you have to find solutions."

of the world, but you have to wake up every morning and work toward solutions." As with his 2008 tour, Johnson is donating his personal profits from this summer's outing – the U.S. leg kicks off in Hartford, Connecticut, on July 9th – to a wide range of charities, through his Johnson Ohana Charitable Foundation (the nonprofit focuses on environmental, arts and music education, and has given away more than \$750,000 in the past two years). "It's rewarding to know that the music's doing tangible things,"

Artists Who Give Back



MY MORNING JACKET

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ROB THOMAS

Proceeds from his solo tour will go toward pet sanctuaries and aiding homeless families.



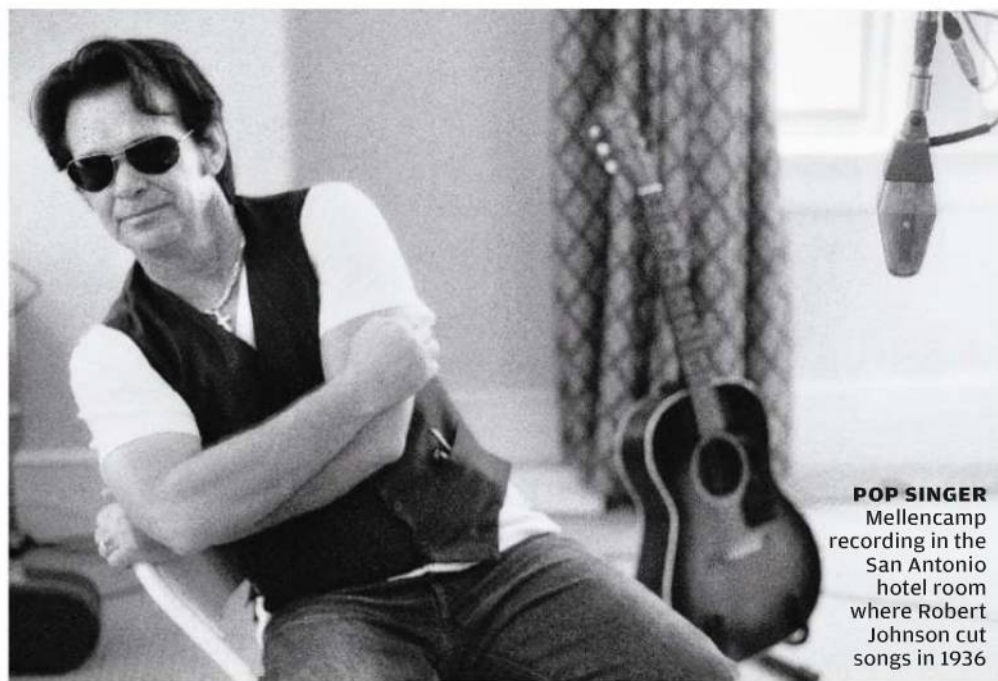
CAROLE KING AND JAMES TAYLOR

VIP-ticket profits will go to the NRDC and the Alliance for Wild Rockies.

Johnson says. "We have a meeting once a year and go over all the grants, and see that 60 instruments got bought for this school district, and there's a new community garden being funded."

At a time when many superstar acts are having trouble selling concert tickets, Johnson is becoming a huge draw on the road. His last tour grossed \$22 million; he's now big enough to play Madison Square Garden on July 14th. What really makes him enthusiastic about this run, though, is that he's cut the soundcheck out of his schedule. Adopting his dad's just-go-surfing philosophy, he plans to spend each day with his family – maybe visiting a local museum – and then show up for the concert.

To the Sea, made in three weeks of solar-powered recording in Hawaii and Los Angeles, has more energy than Johnson's 2008 *Sleep Through the Static*, but it doesn't stray far from his island-troubadour formula. "People who don't like my music put it down by saying, 'It's background music,'" Johnson says. "I always thought of that as a positive thing. I like music you can put on during a barbecue, like Bob Marley." He chuckles. "I hope to continue in the realm of barbecue music." **GAVIN EDWARDS**



POP SINGER
Mellencamp
recording in the
San Antonio
hotel room
where Robert
Johnson cut
songs in 1936

John Mellencamp Digs Through His Archives for New Box Set

Four-disc 'Rural Route 7609' features the hits – plus rarities, deep cuts

JOHN MELLENCAMP ADMITS he wasn't stoked about compiling *On the Rural Route 7609*, his new four-disc retrospective. "I didn't have any interest in doing a box set – I know what happens

TRACK BY TRACK

with them," he says. "You go to the hits and you skip the rest." But the rocker saw an opportunity to turn casual fans on to his deep cuts – so each disc intersperses hits with lesser-known album tracks in non-chronological order. "People will discover that I have songs besides 'Pink Houses,'" he says. But it's not like Mellencamp, 58, is living in the past: In August, he'll release a new album, the T Bone Burnett-produced *No Better Than This*. And in 2012, he'll premiere *Ghost Brothers of Darkland County*, the musical he co-wrote with Stephen King. An LP of music from the show – featuring Elvis Costello and Rosanne Cash – is also in the can. In the meantime, Mellencamp reflects on some key tracks from *On the Rural Route*:

"Pink Houses" 1983

"I could have written a better last verse for that," Mellencamp says of his 1983 hit. "We recorded in this broke-down house," he says. "The engineer was in the kitchen, the band was in the living room. I walked in, played it a couple of times, and bam! We were amateurs, but we were the best amateurs in the country."

"Authority Song" (demo) 1983

The Bobby Fuller Four's 1965 hit "I Fought the Law" was the inspiration for this 1983 single. "I've always had the cavalier attitude that if it's out there, it's fine," he says. "If I read something in a book or hear something on a record, then it's part of my vocabulary." The version here is a solo acoustic demo found in a box with more than 50 cassettes of home recordings.

"Peaceful World" (acoustic version) 2001

"All of these songs start in the same place, as folk songs," Mellencamp says – and there's no better example than this meditative acoustic number, which took on new meaning after 9/11. But the cut brings back unpleasant memories: To

Mellencamp's disgust, a record exec criticized the song because it featured an African-American singer (India.Arie) and the lyrics tackled racism in the U.S. "When I heard that, I said, 'I can't be with Columbia anymore. Get me outta here.'"

"To Washington" 2003

Mellencamp added new anti-Bush lyrics to this traditional folk tune for his 2003 covers set, *Trouble No More*, released in the run-up to the Iraq War. "It was not received very well," he says. "When the song came out, everyone was really gung-ho on revenge. Quite clearly in my mind what they were doing was wrong. But I was surprised by the reaction."

"Some Day the Rains Will Fall" 2010

The newest tune on the box set is an outtake from his upcoming LP, cut in the same San Antonio hotel room where Robert Johnson recorded in 1936. Although the hotel is now a Sheraton, Mellencamp says the room's vibe is unchanged. "Can you imagine if you were able to walk into the room where Hemingway wrote his best work?" he says. "That's the feeling."

DAVID BROWNE

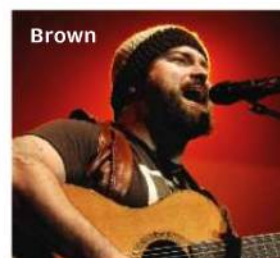
IN THE NEWS

'Exile' a Hit Again for the Stones

The two-disc reissue of the **Rolling Stones'** 1972 classic *Exile on Main Street* surpassed expectations by debuting at Number Two – and bringing the band a modern-rock radio hit with "Plundered My Soul," a reworked outtake from the original *Exile* sessions. "Everything we did was comparable to what labels do for new releases by superstar artists," says Bruce Resnikoff, head of Universal Music Enterprises. "It's had an amazing impact on the entire Stones catalog." The *Exile* reissue is the first new release from the Stones' partnership with Universal Records, and the band aggressively promoted the album. "Every time I turn on a TV or open a magazine, I see another interview," says Resnikoff. To publicize the reissue, **Mick Jagger**, **Keith Richards** and **Charlie Watts** appeared on *Late Night With Jimmy Fallon* and attended a premiere of the new *Stones in Exile* doc in New York. "It's a lot easier to sell a Rolling Stones T-shirt to a kid than a Stones album," says Universal Records head Monte Lipman. "But you have a new generation discovering them."

Zac Brown Band Prep New Album

After two years on the road supporting their double-platinum 2008 debut, *The Foundation*, **Zac Brown Band** have started working on their



follow-up, *You Get What You Give*. The band is recording the disc – slated for fall – in its hometown of Atlanta and at **Jimmy Buffett's** Shrimp Boat Sound studio in the Florida Keys. The album features material the group has been testing out on the road, including the New Orleans-influenced rocker "Settle Me Down" and the somber acoustic cut "Colder Weather." "People wonder whether or not we can follow up with the hype from the first record," Brown says. "We're gonna punch them in the mouth."

FROM LEFT: KURT MARKUS; TIM MOSENFELDER/GETTY IMAGES

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ON THE CHARTS

Drake

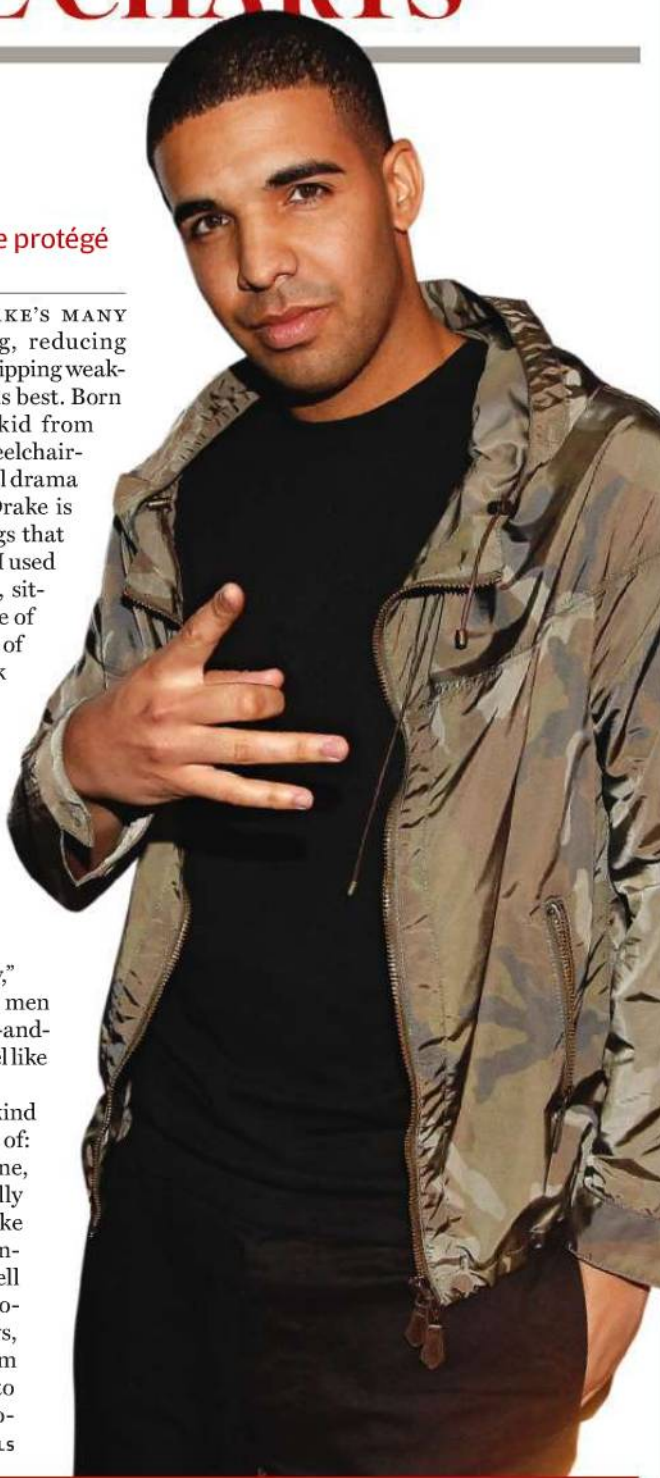
How the lady-killing Lil Wayne protégé is dominating radio in 2010

AMONG HIP-HOP STAR DRAKE'S MANY talents – singing, rapping, reducing women to doe-eyed mush – flipping weaknesses into strengths is probably his best. Born Aubrey Graham, a half-Jewish kid from Toronto who got his break as a wheelchair-bound paraplegic in the after-school drama *DeGrassi: The Next Generation*, Drake is not your typical MC. “A lot of things that could have been strikes against me, I used to my advantage,” Drake, 23, says, sitting in a Manhattan studio a couple of weeks before the June 15th release of his debut, *Thank Me Later* – a lock to hit Number One. “He can lean toward urban, and he can lean toward pop,” says Jill Strada, programmer for New York hip-hop station Hot 97. “Even Jay-Z has issues getting on pop radio.”

Thank Me Later has already spawned two Top 20 singles (“Find Your Love” and “Over”). A natural charmer, Drake sings his own hooks and, in tracks like “Fancy,” big-ups the kinds of details most men miss: perfectly done hair and heel-and-handbag combos. “Women like to feel like you’re paying attention,” he says.

Thank Me Later’s guest list is the kind most rookie artists can only dream of: Kanye West, Alicia Keys, Lil Wayne, Jay-Z. Those last two are especially important: Wayne, who signed Drake after a bidding war, has been an invaluable mentor, even from his cell on Rikers Island, and Jay-Z has provided much wisdom. But, Drake says, the best advice he’s gotten was from another collaborator: “T.I. told me to never stop smiling. That’s what people like about me.”

JOSH EELLS



IN THE NEWS

Aerosmith: Back in the Saddle

Only a few months ago, **Aerosmith** were in full meltdown mode, with guitarist **Brad Whitford** implying **Steven Tyler** was back on drugs and that they were considering hiring a replacement. But then Tyler went to rehab, and the five band members sat down to hash things out. “I just said one or two things to Steven, and he said one or two things to me,” guitarist **Joe Perry** says. “Being as close as we are, that’s all we needed to do. Then we knew it was time to get the band back together.” The group just wrapped a South American tour and is playing American amphitheaters with opening act **Sammy Hagar** later this summer. After that, Aerosmith plan to begin



their first album of original material in nearly a decade. “We’ll probably get in the studio sometime around the holidays or early next year,” Perry says. “We really owe it to ourselves to give this record everything we got.”

Jim James Rocks Against Mining

Jim James is hitting the road in July to raise awareness of the environmentally devastating mining practice known as mountaintop removal – extracting coal by blowing off the tops of mountains in Appalachian country. “People’s lives are being ruined,” says the **My Morning Jacket** frontman, who’s bringing along two other Southern talents, singer-songwriter Daniel Martin Moore and cellist Ben Sollee. “They put the rubble into the valleys and rivers. It affects wildlife and plants. People are turning on their water and having sludge come out of the faucet.” The trio will break out MMJ tunes and songs from the new *Dear Companion* charity album. “It’s similar to what we did on the *Monsters of Folk* tour,” James says. “We’ll be learning each other’s songs. It’s going to be pretty folky.”

Yo! Gen Y Raps: No Thugs, Just Hugs

B.o.B

The Atlanta MC’s mix of New Age rhymes and slick pop hooks is working for him: His debut LP has already landed two Top Five hits – the lovey-dovey “Nothin’ on You” and the emo “Airplanes,” with Hayley Williams.



Jason Derülo

Derülo’s sugary rap-sung vocals ride over a Euro-style palette of whooshing trancey synths and booming kick drums. His debut spawned a Number One hit, the Imogen Heap-sampling “Watcha Say.”



Travie McCoy

“Billionaire,” the hit single from the Gym Class Heroes frontman’s new solo album, is a super-breezy reggae-pop ode to making 10 figures – and then giving it away to Katrina victims and orphans. Aww!





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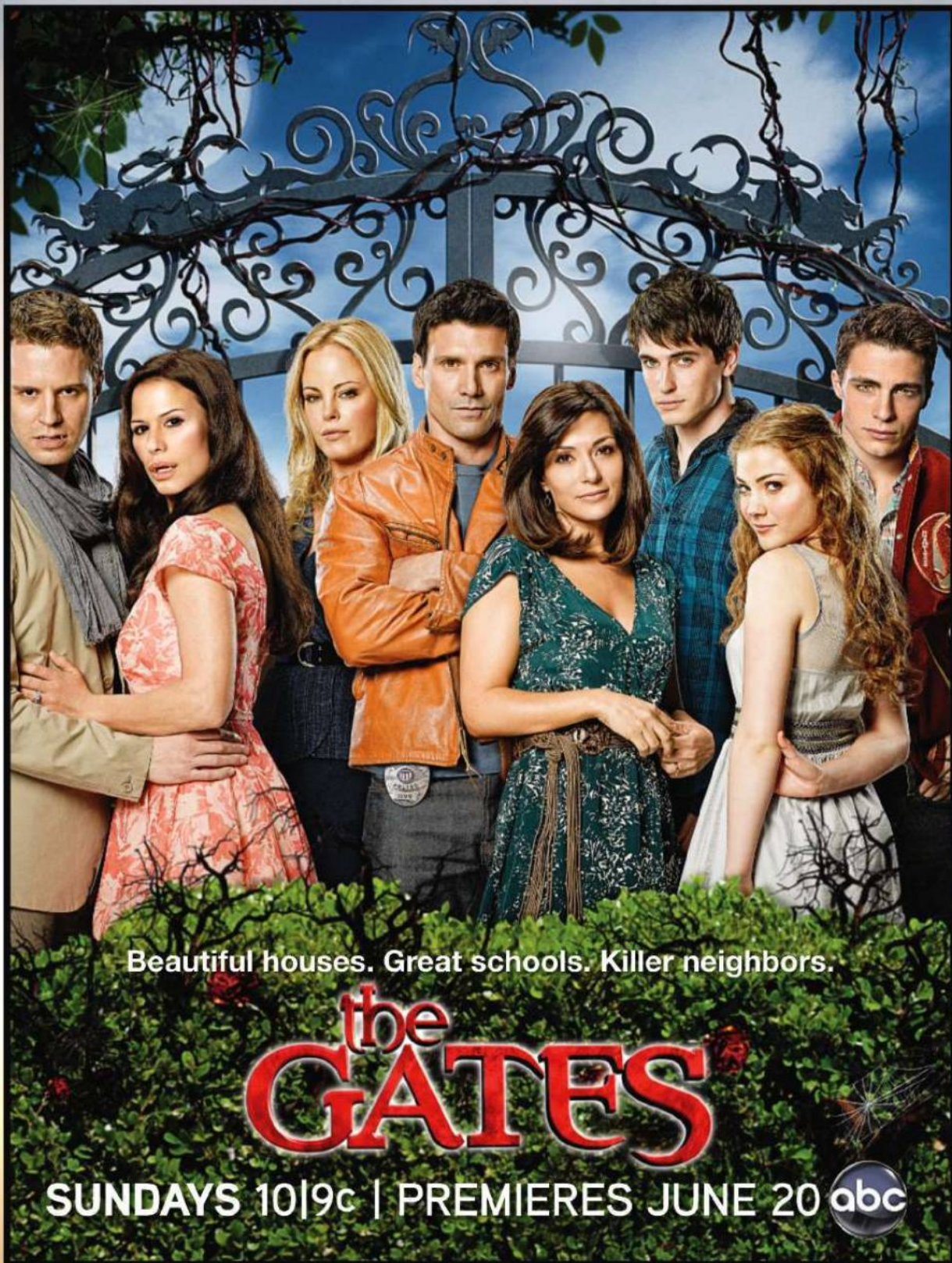
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BACKSTAGE BROS
Matthews and
drummer Carter
Beauford in
Hartford

DMB Kick Off the Summer

Band busts out killer rarities at first stop on 51-date monster tour

WHEN THE DAVE MATTHEWS Band kicked off their summer tour on May 28th in Hartford, Connecticut, it was with a highly unusual set, featuring extremely rare performances of decade-old songs like "JTR" and "Kit Kat Jam" – and busting out the new mellow rocker "Break for It." "We got together a couple of days before that show, and instead of rehearsing the tracks we usually play, we decided to only play stuff

we hadn't played in years," says Matthews, checking in from their fourth date, in New York. "Not to be too cutesy about it, but it was like meeting up with old friends."

For the past 19 years, DMB have faithfully hit the road every summer, earning more money over the last decade in the U.S. than Madonna, the Rolling Stones or U2 – a staggering \$530 million. But giving his fans plenty of advance notice, Matthews, who has three kids, has announced the band will take 2011 off. "I've always thought we couldn't survive taking a year off," he says. "I'm

scared about losing some of our relationship with our audience. But those are the same reasons why we have to do it. Everything seems so perfect that it's time to rock the boat."

As the tour rolls on – including two shows at the New York Mets' Citi Field, a headlining slot at Bonnaroo and a stop at the Hollywood Bowl – the band plans to keep mixing it up. "We have a room backstage set up with instruments," says Matthews. "Hopefully, that will lead us toward new music, or re-broadcasting more old stuff. Or, 'What if I played drums and you played kazoo?'" **AUSTIN SCAGGS**

Slipknot Bassist Paul Gray, a.k.a. the Pig, Dies at 38

Group's co-founder helped create its twisted look, aggro sound

PAUL GRAY, THE BASSIST in the thrash-metal band Slipknot, known as Number 2 or the Pig, was found dead in an Urbandale,

TRIBUTE

Iowa, hotel room on May 24th. He was 38. According to a 911 call, he was discovered near a syringe and pills. "He was a musical genius," says Slipknot

percussionist Shawn "Clown" Crahan. "Nobody in the band would be anywhere today if it wasn't for him."

Gray and Crahan met in Des Moines in 1991. "We started jamming in his mother's basement," says Crahan. "He gave me the first Rage Against the Machine album." The pair eventually recruited seven other members and developed the group's signature masks and aggro-yet-melodic sound. By the late 1990s, Slipknot were the most popular band in the exploding new-metal scene



Gray onstage in May

– their 1999 disc *Slipknot* sold 2 million copies. But Gray battled demons: In 2003, he was arrested for cocaine possession after a car accident. "I can't promise the band will continue – that would be a foolish bet," says Crahan. "He'd want us to carry on, though." **ANDY GREENE**

IN THE NEWS

Musicians Boycott Arizona Over Immigration Law

Rage Against the Machine, Kanye West and Conor Oberst are among the musicians openly criticizing Arizona for its new immigration law. The Sound Strike, organized by Rage frontman **Zack de la Rocha**, calls on bands to boycott the state as a way to protest law SB 1070, which gives police the right to stop and question anyone who might even resemble an illegal immigrant. "This law is basically soft-core apartheid," says Rage guitarist **Tom Morello**. "It's disgraceful. There's an argument that a majority of the people in Arizona support it. But at one point, a majority of people in Mississippi supported lynching. That doesn't make it right." Morello sent out a mass



e-mail to musician friends and enlisted Cypress Hill, Rise Against and Joe Satriani; others who've signed on include Sonic Youth, Massive Attack and Tenacious D. Mexican-American act Los Lobos, though not affiliated with Sound Strike, have canceled an upcoming gig in the state.

IN BRIEF

■ **Rod Stewart** has opted out of the **Faces** reunion – but the band is going to carry on with Simply Red lead singer **Mick Hucknall**. The group hopes to tour the world next year. "It's still Faces," keyboardist **Ian McLagan** says. "I just hope that people come with an open mind, because one way or another they're going to be surprised."

■ The London apartment where **Jimi Hendrix** lived from 1968 to 1970 will open to the public for the first time this summer to mark the 40th anniversary of his death. The apartment will be stocked with rare Hendrix artifacts, such as handwritten directions to the Isle of Wight that he scrawled on the back of a map.



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Sting

On touring with a 45-piece orchestra, loving Lady Gaga and why the Police are done
By Austin Scaggs

IN A CAVERNOUS STUDIO ON West 26th Street in Manhattan, Sting is rehearsing for his ambitious summer world tour, in which he'll rework solo and Police hits with the 45-piece Royal Philharmonic Concert Orchestra. As the massive band runs through his 1985 single "Russians," Sting kicks his legs out like a Cossack dancer, and during the Police's "Next to You," he playfully waves his arms like a conductor. Later, at his apartment on Central Park West, Sting explains that the idea of exploring his catalog came in 2008, when he was invited to perform with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. "Hearing my music interpreted in that very lush, dramatic fashion was very powerful," he says. "It felt like being tied to the front of a train." Sting rests his feet on a coffee table, next to a stack of *Mad Men* DVDs. ("I love that redhead," he says.) Three basses lie around the room, and a lute sits on a couch opposite him. Despite his love of Elizabethan music, Sting insists his summer tour won't be a stodgy affair. "Certainly everyone should sing along," he says. "It's not going to be a recital. It's going to be fun."

You've borrowed from classical music throughout your career. Where does that love come from?

"Stolen" is a better word. I wasn't educated to think that music should be split into genres – BBC radio played Beethoven's "Fifth" alongside pop and punk. In the first live satellite broadcast, the Beatles played "All You Need Is Love" with an orchestra, and that opened a lot of doors.

Can you go the rest of your life without playing with the Police again?

Why do you think that's important?
Because the reunion was insanely successful.

There are hundreds of musicians I have worked with successfully over the years – and no one has asked me if I'll play with those lads again. I'm not a great lover of nostalgia. I get bored easily. Some people find that certain chemistry, and they stay with it for the rest of their lives. That's not good or bad, it just isn't me. My MO is to surprise people, and that was the reasoning behind re-forming the Police: "What would surprise people more than re-forming the band I'd said I'd never re-form?"

What was the story behind the old Fender bass you played on that entire tour?

It's from 1954, slightly younger than me. I found it over 20 years ago, and it was like a little orphan that nobody wanted. I know for a fact that Leo Fender would the pickups himself. That's a magician at work.

You're playing your 1996 murder ballad "I Hung My Head" on this tour. What do you think of Johnny Cash's version of the song?

Who better to sing that song? He got one of the words wrong, though. He changed "stream" to "sheen." But I wasn't going to call him up and say, "Hey, Johnny, you've got to rerecord it!"

The song is about a man who accidentally murders someone. What inspired it?

It was just free association. It's not something I experienced firsthand – I wrote "Tomorrow We'll See," about a transsexual prostitute, which is also not something I've experienced! I just thought "I Hung My Head" offered an interesting moral argument: "Does this man deserve to die when it was an accident?" The song is really about the idea of guns having a totemic magic that will attract their misuse. That's why I don't own any guns.

Is there a place where you like to go to feel the most creative?

When I'm walking. I'll listen to demos, and then I'll walk around with my iPod and mutter to myself like a crazy man. Right now I'm listening to the Estonian composer Arvo Pärt. It's minimalist and strange.

Any pop music blowing your mind?

I'm always looking for surprising bubblegum. For pop music to reach me, it has to surprise every eight bars. I really like Lady Gaga. She's clearly smart, and she can play the piano and guitar with authority.

I interviewed Madonna last year – she told me that she finds you a little intimidating.

I like Madonna, so I don't know why she's intimidated. It's not my intention. I'm just shy.

She told me you're always sitting in the corner playing some medieval 16-stringed instrument.

[Glances over at his lute] It has 26 strings.





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2010 TOUR DE FAT

"A little MDMA once in a while never killed anybody, but I really don't do drugs." —Lady Gaga

Random Notes

Kings of New York

The Kings of Leon moved to New York in April, hitting Avatar Studios to craft the mega-anticipated follow-up to *Only by the Night*. "I'll be damned if we didn't go make a fun record," says drummer Nathan Followill. Adds bro Caleb, "It's dirty, old-school rock & roll."

Nathan Followill shakes his heartbreak at Avatar Studios.

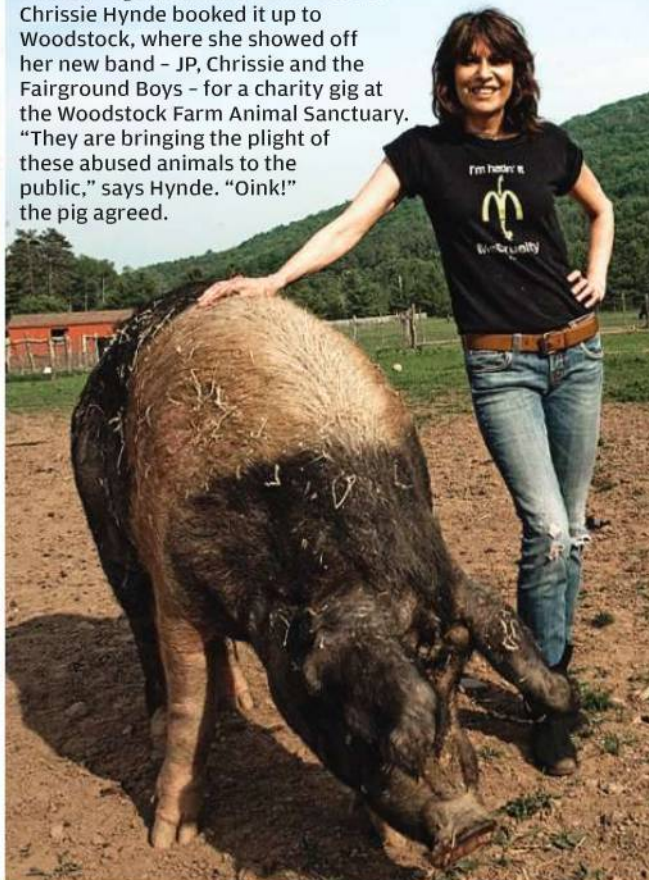


Freaky Fiddy

Is 50 Cent bulimic? No, silly, he's just so deeply committed to his role in *Things Fall Apart*—about a football player stricken with cancer—that the MC dropped a shocking fiddy-four pounds. "I was starving," he says. His biggest hurdle during his crash diet? "The Chili's commercials. I was like, 'Yo, leave me alone!'"

MY PIGGY WAS GONE

Rocker, vegetarian and swine-herder Chrissie Hynde booked it up to Woodstock, where she showed off her new band—JP, Chrissie and the Fairground Boys—for a charity gig at the Woodstock Farm Animal Sanctuary. "They are bringing the plight of these abused animals to the public," says Hynde. "Oink!" the pig agreed.



Paul and the Prez, living in perfect harmony

Meet the Beatle

At the White House, Paul McCartney (y'know, the Beatle) serenaded our First Lady with "Michelle" and became the first Brit to win the Gershwin Prize, doled out by the Library of Congress. Macca said, "After the last eight years, it's great to have a president who knows what a library is." Eat it, Bushie!

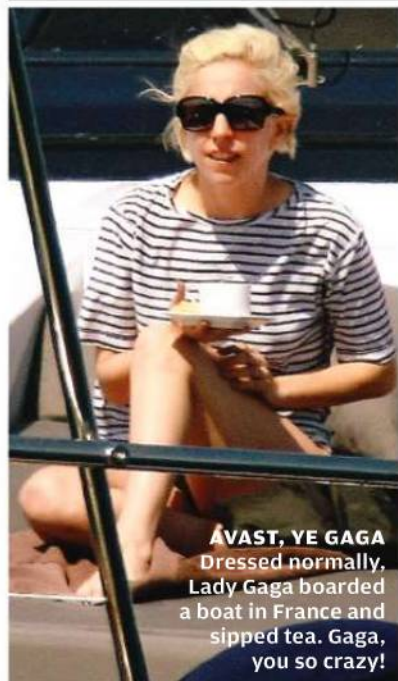
CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: TERRENCE JENNINGS/LPH; COURTESY OF 50 CENT; JAY SCHLEUSENER; JOSH ROTHSTEIN; KEVIN LAMARQUE/REUTERS/LANDOV



FOLKIN' AROUND
Taylor and King
in Seattle

Sweet Baby Boomers

Inspired by gigs they did together in 2007 to mark the 50th anniversary of Los Angeles club Troubadour - where the soft-rocking singer-songwriters launched their careers - James Taylor and Carole King are hitting U.S. arenas with a three-hour show featuring hits like "Fire and Rain" and "I Feel the Earth Move." "There's a huge amount of energy coming from the audiences," says Taylor. "I always envied the reception that the Stones or Springsteen got - now the crowds are sweeping us away!"



AVAST, YE GAGA
Dressed normally, Lady Gaga boarded a boat in France and sipped tea. Gaga, you so crazy!



DIFFERENT STROKES
Bret Michaels suffered 17 aneurysms and nine strokes during the American Idol finale, but somehow lived to congratulate the mildly talented winner, Lee DeWyze.



TOM TOM CLUB
A disturbingly giddy Tom Cruise joined the Black Eyed Peas at a London gig. At the afterparty, Cruise shouted, "I feel the need - the need for humps."



ACHY BREAKY TART
Untameable teen Miley Cyrus hit the beaches in Mexico with papa Billy Ray, where she donned this totally age-appropriate string bikini.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: ELISSA KLINE; G. TRES/SPLASH NEWS; INFO PHOTO: RAMEY PHOTO; FRANK MICELLOTTA/FOX/PICTUREGROUP

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Vampire Eric (Alexander Skarsgård) shows Paquin's Sookie his teeth.

Dirty Pretty Things

How 'True Blood' perfected the mix of 'Twilight' and Skinemax By Melissa Maerz

SEASON THREE OF "TRUE Blood" unfolds on your average night in the *really* dirty South: The mist is drifting over the bayou, and a vampire named Eric is fucking a naked girl who is chained up in the basement of a bar. Meanwhile, Eric's bisexual sidekick, Pam, is offering to suck off telepath-next-door Sookie Stackhouse, who's having none of it: "I'm in no mood," she says, "for lesbian weirdness tonight, Pam." Elsewhere, Sookie's brother, Jason, who used to get high off vampire blood, is repeating his new personal mantra: "Conscience off. Dick on. And everything's gonna be all right."

Ah, vampire romance – it's not just for kids anymore. Where *Twilight* captures the drama of being 17 years old – a time when girls ponder Big Questions like, "Does he like me? Will he just end up hurting me?" – the special genius of *True Blood* is that it applies the overheated emotions of teenage romance to the world

of stressed-out adults who are so bored by their neighbors, their jobs and their sex lives that they're willing to get chained up by the local Dracula just to stir up their Saturday nights and give the townspeople something to talk about.

True Blood Sundays, 9 p.m., HBO

By combining all the skin of *Real Sex* with the storytelling of an Emmy-winning drama, the show has mastered the perfect formula for a true cable-TV hit, giving HBO its best ratings since *The Sopranos*. Last September, more than 5 million viewers watched the Season Two finale. "Women like the romance, and men like the sex and violence," says series creator Alan Ball. "People who wouldn't normally watch just to see topless women will watch because they want to see a character achieve their dreams."

But these are small-town ambitions. Nobody on *True Blood* is half as success-

ful as *Mad Men*'s Don Draper or half as smart as *Breaking Bad*'s Walter White, but that's their whole appeal: Everyone's just like your uncle's best friend's cousin. The show's hero, Sookie (Anna Paquin), is a waitress. Her friends are line cooks, construction workers, bartenders. Their day-to-day routines are just as agonizing and filled with humiliations as the undertakers on *Six Feet Under* or the high school teachers on *Hung* – except that there are vampires, shape-shifters, telepaths and werewolves. This is poor, red-state America, and it would be a deeply depressing place without all these supernatural beings running amok.

"People have a primal need for magic," says Ball. "It's been ironed out of our lives. Supernatural heroes bring that magic back."

On *True Blood*, the magic is always sexual, and pleasure is never far from danger, because it opens up forbidden emotions. "A vampire is never at the mercy of

his emotions," one bloodsucker muses. "He dominates them." But that's easier said than done, especially when fucking is involved. And on *True Blood*, fucking is *always* involved. In *Twilight*, sex is terrifying and forbidden. Here, it's a given and never disappointing. When vampire Bill Compton (Stephen Moyer) bites Sookie, fills his mouth with blood and feeds it back into her mouth, she's not scared. "*Twilight*'s all about being chaste," says Paquin. "*True Blood*'s the opposite of chaste. Sookie's definitely got this sexual adrenaline-junkie death-wish stuff going on. But she also has the same fears all women have: that your man's going to drink you dry, and then once he's had his fill, he'll take off."

During the first season, as the show was finding its way, it used vampirism as a stand-in for "invisible" people, from homosexuals to African-Americans living in the South. "I grew up in a small town in Georgia," Ball says, "and you never even saw African-Americans. I'm gay, so it was clear to me from an early age that people demonize things they don't understand."

But from the start, the gay allegory felt too confining, and *True Blood* started to downplay it, while amping up the sexual tension: The third season finds Sookie caught between bad-guy Eric and good-guy Bill. But there's a deeper story there, too. "Everyone's trying to recapture their humanity," says Ball. "Bill misses being human, and Sookie knows she has special powers, so she's wondering if she's really human after all. It's all a fantasy about triumph over death, because who wouldn't want to live forever?"

The competing vision of what eternal life brings is the biggest difference between *Twilight* and *True Blood*. Staying young and hopelessly in love with the same guy might seem pretty good to a 17-year-old girl, but in the world of *True Blood* it's a total nightmare. That's made clear by the show's most electric character: a bratty, hyper-emotional, 17-year-old vampire named Jessica (Deborah Ann Woll), who's not too different from your average teen. She's filled with desires she can't control. She needs to be home before dawn. And sometimes her life makes her just want to *die*. You get the sense there's no worse fate than staying 17 forever. On a show aimed at grown-ups, it's a great joke: Eternal youth is wasted on the young.



Iacano is a teen with something extra.

The Summer Watch List

Horny teenagers, superspies, singing cops and medieval epics: A guide to the season. By Rob Sheffield

Burn Notice

Thursdays, 9 p.m. USA

Miami's coolest superspies return with martinis, voice-overs and assassinations

All these years after getting burned and abandoned in Miami, Michael Westen (Jeffrey Donovan) still can't break out of town – but hey, how hard would *you* try to escape Miami? He's got a perfect gig right where he is, swaggering around in colorful blazers and evoking the days when *Magnum, P.I.* and *Hardcastle and McCormick* ruled the airwaves. He also keeps dispensing his voice-over proverbs on the tricks of the espionage trade.

(How can you tell if you're dealing with a real federal agent? The cheap shoes.) In its fourth go-round, *Burn Notice* keeps coming up with new angles for Michael's predicament, with Robert Wisdom showing up as Vaughn, one of the bureaucrats who betrayed Michael, now begging for his help. "There are some things governments do well, like run a military or a post office," Vaughn says. But then there are *other* jobs, like assassinating people, that a government needs to farm out to freelancers, like burned spies.



Donovan with co-star Gabrielle Anwar

Will Michael take the bait and come back into the fold? Will the government betray him again? One thing we know for certain: He's going to break the all-time TV record for most voice-overs in a season.

Memphis Beat

June 22nd (Tuesdays, 10 p.m.) TNT

'My Name Is Earl' star gets a badge, straps on a gun and sings the blues

Is Jason Lee a renegade cop? Or a blues guitarist? Hey, he's a renegade cop *and* a blues guitarist! Talk about pimping shameless male fantasies – but *Memphis Beat* does it right without a false note. Lee plays the Southern lawman who cuts loose after-hours as a guitar hero on the Memphis saloon scene. He's got DJ Qualls as his slack-ass partner, plus Alfre Woodard as the requisite by-the-

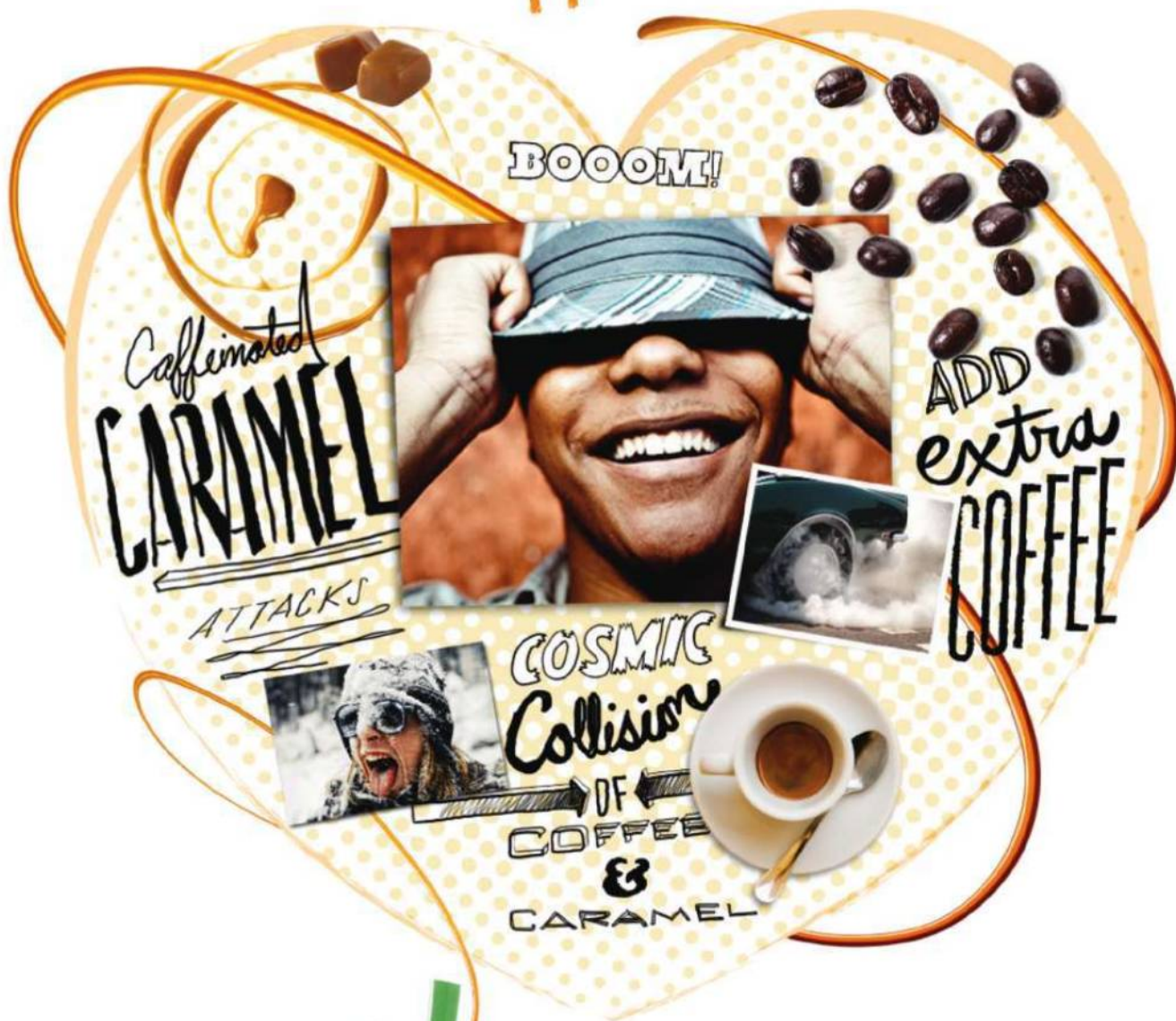
The Hard Times of RJ Berger

Mondays, 10 p.m., MTV

MTV tries a scripted comedy – think 'Hung' in a high school

MTV takes a break from all the *Teen Mom* and *16 and Pregnant* marathons and looks at the lighter side of sex-crazed teens. When ordinary loser RJ Berger's shorts fall down at a basketball game, the whole school finds out that he's freakishly well-endowed. But the only girl who cares is the Daria-esque goth who tries to seduce Berger (Paul Iacano) with banter like "There's a vampire buffet in my panties!" *Hard Times* is an old-school scripted teen sex comedy – no time-lapse jokes about sexting, just keg parties and masturbation gags recycled from *American Pie* and *Porky's*. Even the racism is bizarrely old-fashioned – whenever an Asian character appears, we hear a gong and koto music. (The black gym teacher gets the unpleasant job of looking at Berger's schlong and gushing, "It's a goddamn Buick Regal.") This is no *Beavis and Butt-Head* or *Undressed* – and it's nowhere near as funny as *Jersey Shore*. But at least it beats *Teen Mom*.

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book lieutenant, exasperated by his free-wheeling attitude. *Memphis Beat* may be familiar material, but it's hugely likable, with real fondness for the city's music. Lee is the right kind of laid-back actor to play it straight; any hint of irony would kill the mood, but this guy knows how to do mellow with conviction, the way he did on *My Name Is Earl*. And although his pornstar-stache is gone, he makes up for it hairwise with some truly awesome sideburns.

Covert Affairs

July 13th (Tuesdays, 10 p.m.) USA

The newest spy in USA's lineup of lighthearted action thrillers

Let's face it: What this country needs is more shows where Piper Perabo plays a CIA agent. You remember Piper from *Coyote Ugly*, but even though she's the rookie in the USA Network's killer lineup of crafty action hits, she's ready to bat cleanup, because this is one great spy adventure. She's apparently been recruited as part of a special elite squadron of pouty-lipped, wide-eyed agents with perpetually tousled hair. When she's assigned to go undercover as a Russian call girl, her supervisor sniffs, "What you're wearing is fine." *Covert Affairs* has all the USA trademarks cranked to the max – the light touch, fast talk, clever twists, slick shoot-outs. Like most agents, Piper shows up for her first day at Langley in four-inch Louboutin heels and instantly bonds with her blind sidekick, Christopher Gorham, who explains, "The CIA highly encourages dating within the agency; it keeps things within the circle of trust. It's like a Club Med without free drinks." *Covert Affairs* has the perfect TV formula: a little bit of *Alias*, a little bit of *MacGyver* and a little bit of the *Charlie's Angels* NASCAR episode.



The boys are back in town for a seventh season.

Entourage

June 27th (Sundays, 10:30 p.m.) HBO

The endless Hollywood bromance just keeps rolling on

After six seasons, the Hollywood party boys are still fighting off adulthood tooth and nail, clinging to their very special bond. Johnny Drama scrounges for acting jobs, even if it hurts his pride losing the *Fall Guy* remake to Dean Cain. Vince gives himself a bad haircut, dates Sasha Grey and gets bullied into doing his own stunts. (Johnny assures him, "You know, I did the fall-down-the-steps myself in *My So-Called Life* – it was very liberating.") But as usual, it's asshole agent Jeremy Piven who steals the show, boasting, "I'd blow myself if I were more flexible."

Top Chef

June 16th (Wednesdays, 9 p.m.) Bravo

Beware, chefs: Padma's back with more rack, and she's ruder than ever

Last year, *Top Chef* hit pay dirt with its dishiest season ever, especially the final cook-off between the Voltaggio broth-

ers, which was on some Shakespearean *Godfather* shit. So how could *Top Chef* get even better? Padma Lakshmi's gotten bustier! The new season picks up right after her pregnancy, which means Padma-watchers can analyze her new wardrobe, her postpartum rack and her hormonal mood swings. If you thought she was rude and hos-

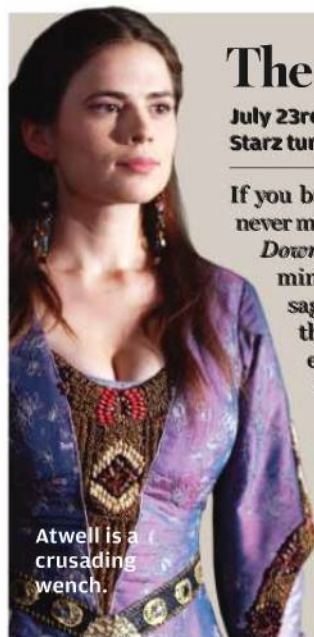
tile to the chefs before, just imagine her now! The new "chef testants" are cooking in Washington, D.C., though they come from all over – the gay Burmese dude from Nashville is an instant front-runner, demonstrating his "motivational dance." New judge Eric Ripert is all dashing French charm, replacing the British clown Toby Young. We'll miss seeing Padma roll her eyes at Toby's stupid jokes – but somehow, you can feel sure that Padma will find other people to abuse.

Rubicon

August 1st (Sundays, 9 p.m.) AMC

What if you uncovered a secret cabal out to rule the world?

AMC's stellar track record of *Mad Men* and *Breaking Bad* speaks for itself – and *Rubicon* seems to be in the same elite class. Judging from the first episode, it's a superbly brainy political thriller in the genus of *Three Days of the Condor* and *The Parallax View*. James Badge Dale plays Will Travers, a rumpled young genius working for a government intelligence agency, the American Policy Institute. One day, he notices a strange pattern in several crossword puzzles based on a clue: "What do lucky lepidoptera larvae eat?" (The answer is "four-leaf clover" – in Latin.) Has he stumbled onto coded messages from a secret worldwide conspiracy? Or is he just cracking up? Travers has some of the geek-savant appeal of *Psych* or *The Mentalist*, but he's more intense – he went crazy after his wife and kid were killed in the 9/11 attacks – and has the trust-no-one vibe of *Fringe* and *X-Files*. *Rubicon* is an original and genuinely scary thriller, thanks in large part to the excellent cast, including Dale (much darker and deeper than he was in *The Pacific*) and the always-great Miranda Richardson. But *Rubicon* also has the emotional finesse to explore the tricky boundaries between grief and paranoia. When someone tells Travers, "Maybe there is no why," he responds, "There's always a why." *Rubicon* makes you eager to follow him wherever this *why* leads.



Atwell is a crusading wench.

The Pillars of the Earth

July 23rd (Fridays, 10 p.m.), Starz

Starz turns an airport paperback into an epic miniseries

If you broke down and got the Starz network so you would never miss another Steve Guttenberg-themed episode of *Party Down*, you're in luck, because Starz landed this big-budget miniseries based on the Ken Follett airport-paperback saga of the Middle Ages. It looks kind of like *Satan's Alley*, the mock movie trailer from *Tropic Thunder* where Robert Downey Jr. and Tobey Maguire are monks who find forbidden love. But this isn't steamy trash in the mode of *The Tudors*. It's more like a 12th-century version of Ayn Rand, with a noble architect building a cathedral to fulfill his vision. The cast is impressive, especially Hayley Atwell as the foxy maiden Aliena, and Ian McShane as the Snape-haired villain Waleran. Special respect to Donald Sutherland – he hams it up as the pompous Earl of Shiring like he wishes he was still on *Dirty Sexy Money*.

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The Jersey Rules

How MTV, in just 10 easy steps, can make the 'Jersey Shore' phenomenon last forever By Rob Sheffield

OH, "JERSEY SHORE" – WE'VE WAITED so long for your return. Once we get you back in our arms, we're never gonna give you up. Never gonna let you down. This time, it'll be forever. So let's figure out how to keep the *Jersey Shore* franchise going for all eternity. It won't be easy, but it is possible. Sure, there's a lot of history to show how difficult it is – the cable highways are littered with the skeletons of entertainingly lurid shows that burned out way too soon. (Talk to me not of *Taradise*, lest I weep.) Here's a brief guide to how our beloved guidos and guidettes can stay famous for a few minutes more.

1 Keep the Team Together

Stretch out for solo projects, by all means, but don't forget to keep buffing the group's brand identity. And when you branch out for *Snooki Joins the Navy* or *Pauly D at Yeshiva*, don't burn your bridges – leave a trail of crumbs back to your main gig. Remember, every Kristin Cavallari who thinks she's a solo star ends up crawling back to *The Hills* on her hands and knees. The *Hills* kids have stayed afloat because they remember the show is the star, not them.

2 Get Knocked Up

The arc of a pregnancy is so similar to the arc of a reality show – shock, tears, suspense and an agonizing finale. That's why pregnancy shows are booming, from the feel-good *A Baby Story* to MTV's *Teen Mom*, or the Learning Channel's slate of *Obese and Pregnant*, *Pregnant at 70* and *Paralyzed and Pregnant*. Sammi

and Ronnie, you could do worse than *She's Having My Guido Bambino!*

3 Have a Wedding

Make sure you schedule the wedding after you have the baby, so you can get two different story lines. You don't want to be like that dork Scott Baio, who had to go and waste his wedding on *Scott Baio Is 46 . . . and Pregnant*. But have the baby, because wedding shows are more fun with a baby around. You don't even have to stay married once the show's over – all of us who loved Carmen Electra and Dave Navarro's *Til Death Do Us Part* knew the marriage would fold as soon as the cameras were unplugged, but that was part of the fun.

4 Travel the World

This one is practically unlimited: The *Jersey Shore* kids go to Rome, where Vinny and Pauly pick up Catholic schoolgirls at the Vatican and lure them to a moonlight swim in the Fontana di Trevi! The *Jersey Shore* kids go to Australia, where JWovw beats the shit out of a kangaroo! Send them to Japan, the Antarctic, a farm in Iowa, a kibbutz in Israel. No matter where they go, they can encounter the same stares of incomprehension as our heroes travel the globe, in the tradition of Marco Polo or Jessica Simpson.

5 Do Drugs

Risky, as far as the old central nervous system is concerned, but a no-brainer in terms of telegenic degeneration. Rehab and recovery stories are

a reality-TV perennial. Part of the reason the *Celebrity Rehab* franchises keep thriving is that falling off the wagon just means another chance to clean up on TV. Whoever thought there were only 12 steps never saw *Sober House*.

6 Solve Crimes

Uh-oh, crime! If hatin' the Man is your occupation, the *Jersey Shore* cops have got a full-time job for you! If they can give a badge to *Steven Seagal: Lawman*, why not send these kids out to bust perps? They're beating up the beat . . . and their beat is *homicide!* Suggested casting coup: William Shatner as their uptight police commissioner, constantly yelling, "Damn it, Situation – I want your badge and hair gel on my desk first thing in the morning!"

7 Learn to Dance

Haven't we learned anything from Joey Fatone? If you can take orders from a choreographer, you can stay on TV as long as you want, bouncing from *Dancing With the Stars* to *Dancing With the Situation*. You might have to deal with Bruno or David Hasselhoff from week to week, but consider that a perk of the job.

8 Learn to Sing

You know what GTL really stands for? "*Glee*" takes your lunch. In other words, start doing show tunes if you want to compete. Wouldn't one of those Jacuzzi scenes get even more poignant if Snooki turned to the camera and belted out "I'm Just a Gypsy From Poughkeepsie"? (Or Angelina could sing something from *The Sound of Music*: "Wild geese that fly with the moon on their wings/I'm a bartender and I do great things!")

9 Make New Friends

This is a last-ditch Hail Mary for reality stars – the kind of show where Paris Hilton holds auditions for her new BFF, or where Brody Jenner fills a house with dudes who want to be his "bromance." It only works for one season, but it'll delay the ax for a few months. Just imagine Snooki picking *America's Next Top Snooki* or JWovw interviewing a crop of prospective KWovws, LWovws and MWovws.

10 Get Stranded on an Island

For the last scene, the Situation can find himself face to face with his long-absent paternal figure, the Landlord, and find out that he is in church for his own funeral. "Where are we going?" the Sith asks. "Let's go find out," says the Landlord. "I guess we got us a situation here," our hero murmurs, as he collapses in the jungle, gets kissed by a dog and closes his eye for the last time. *Aaaand scene!* It worked!

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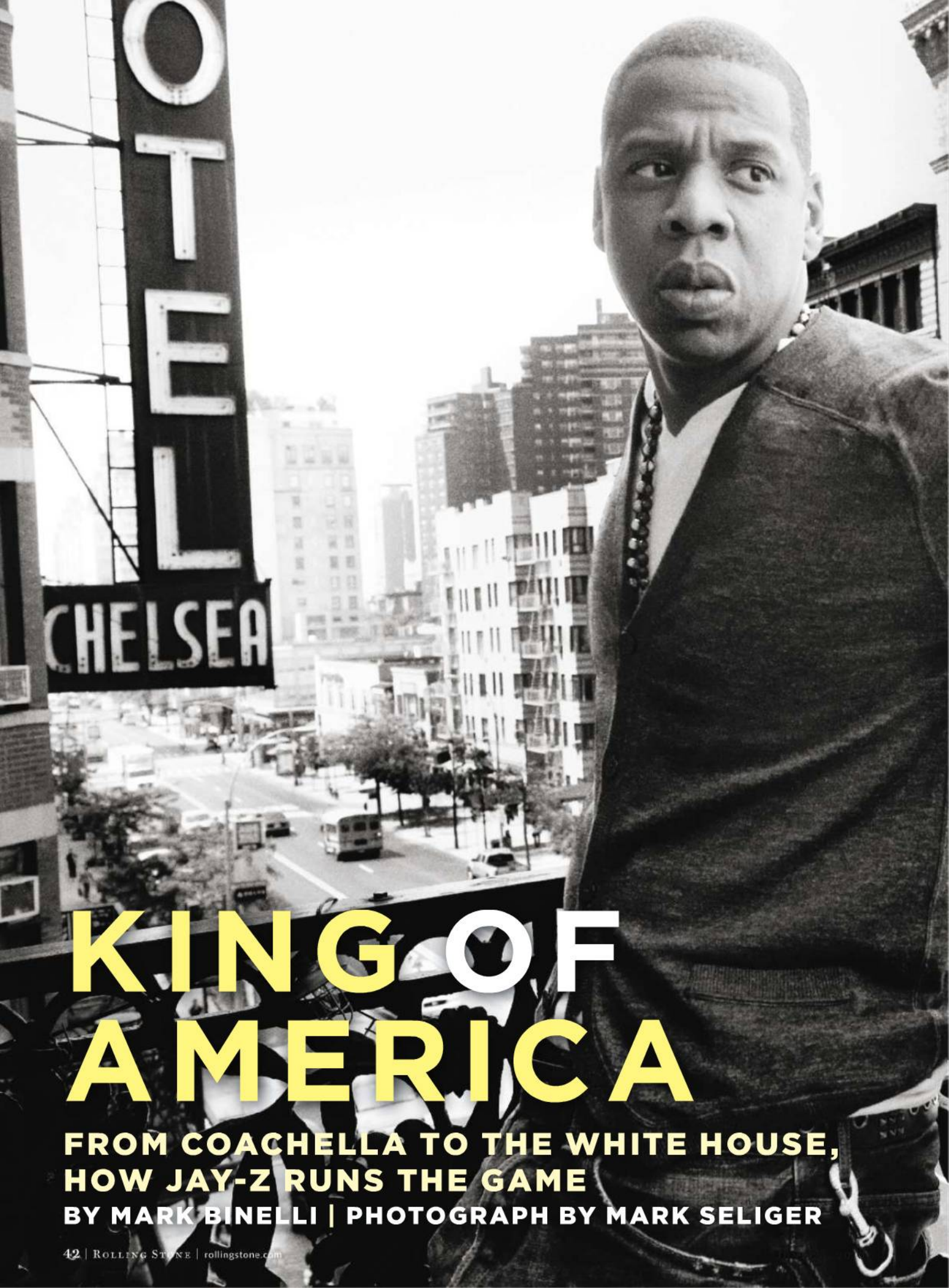
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KING OF AMERICA

**FROM COACHELLA TO THE WHITE HOUSE,
HOW JAY-Z RUNS THE GAME
BY MARK BINELLI | PHOTOGRAPH BY MARK SELIGER**



ON TO THE NEXT ONE
"He's wiser," says friend
Lyor Cohen. "He's always
been curious, but he has
an even more profound
curiosity now."

JAY-Z'S OFFICE INHABITS THE NORTHEASTERN CORNER OF THE 39TH FLOOR OF A SKYSCRAPER JUST SOUTH OF TIMES SQUARE.

It's the top floor, of course, affording spectacular views of the East River and the rival towers of the fashion district. Even Broadway's chaotic mess of neon, from this height, feels soothing in its muted distance, as if specially created to round out Jay-Z's office feng shui. On a recent May evening, Jay, looking trim in a tight gray hoodie, rocks back and forth in an executive chair behind a polished-wood desk and casually fingers a daggerlike silver letter opener. Black-and-white photographs of iconic African-American cultural figures hang on the wall beside him: Ray Charles leaning into a piano; Sammy Davis Jr. standing in the center of the Rat Pack; Muhammad Ali mock-punching all four Beatles; Jean-Michel Basquiat looking fashionable and doomed.

Even sitting behind a desk, the man born Shawn Carter carries himself with such ease and self-confidence, it's as if he's secretly prepared for a high-art portraitist to photograph him at any moment, after which he will assume his rightful place on the wall. He leans forward and taps his iPad, in search of "Light Up," a new song by Drake, the hottest young rapper of the moment. "You know what's great about Drake?" asks Jay. "He has a very clear way of saying things." Jay's own voice, redolent of his native Brooklyn, has the tendency to crack with excitement with endearing regularity. When he pronounces each word of his second sentence with an exacting crispness, I realize he's literally referring to Drake's enunciation. He taps a button on a remote, and the home-theater-size flatscreen on the far wall bursts alive at top volume, playing some baseball game. Jay frowns and hits mute, then finds the Drake song, to which he contributed a verse he's very proud of. Only moments earlier, he had given his approval for the final mix.

Nodding contentedly along to the beat, Jay listens as, in the song, he plays Don Corleone to Drake's Michael, actually telling him at one point, in a riff on the scene in *The Godfather* where Brando warns Pacino about meeting with rival Mafia boss Barzini, "Drake, here's how they're gonna come at you." In the world of hip-hop, Jay-Z, at the advanced age of 40, qualifies as an elder statesman – especially if you consider the fact that previous rappers who successfully transitioned into middle age did so by shifting their careers to Hollywood or some other entrepreneurial activity. Jay, in spite of his myriad business ventures, has been enjoying one of the biggest years of his musical career. With the release of *The Blueprint 3*, his 11th studio album, last September, Jay-Z has now had more Number One albums than Elvis Presley, and the ubiquitous hometown anthem "Empire State of Mind," only nine months out of the gate, is already threatening to shove aside Frank Sinatra's "Theme From New York, New York" to become the city's new unofficial theme song. ("I want to wake up in a city that doesn't sleep" just comes up lacking in the contemporary-feel department next to lines like "MDMA got you feelin' like a champion, the city never sleeps, better slip you an Ambien" – though Jay, who has never tried Ecstasy, admits he had to ask a friend for the drug's call letters.)

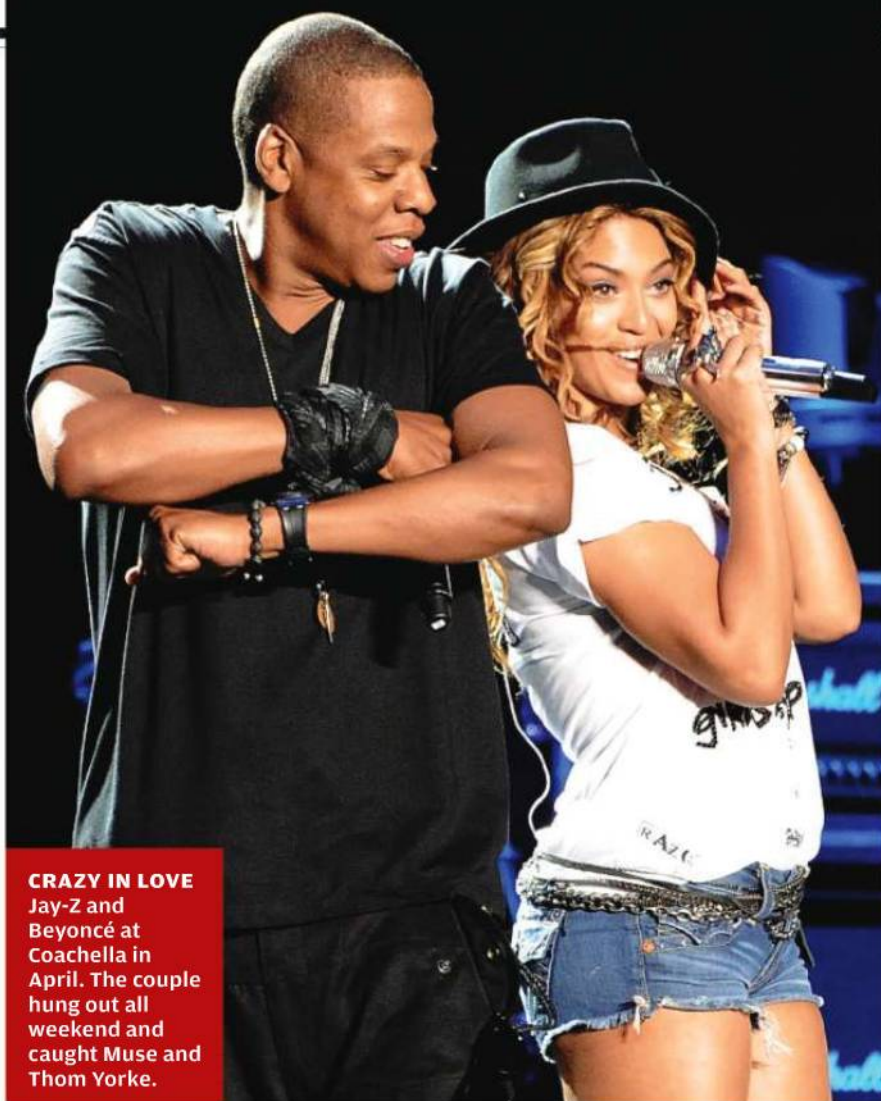
Drawing inspiration from acts as diverse as U2 and Daft Punk, Jay has also been stepping up his live performances. His recent headlining slot at Coachella – which included a reprise of his cheeky take on Oasis' "Wonderwall" and a duet with his wife, Beyoncé Knowles, who sang on "Young Forever" – was widely considered one of the high points of the festival. To the surprise of many, Jay and Beyoncé stuck around for the entire weekend, checking out

sets by the xx, Thom Yorke, Muse, Yeasayer and Beach House; shots of the couple mingling backstage with starstruck indie-rock hipsters were the equivalent of Barack and Michelle Obama deciding to pay a spur-of-the-moment visit to a MoveOn.org potluck in Bennington. Jay will play at least 10 other festivals this summer, capping the tour with a pair of ballpark shows co-headlined by Eminem, one at Yankee Stadium.

Despite a recent *New York Post* story, JAY-Z'S 99 PROBLEMS, which supposedly details how "even the world's most successful hip-hop star isn't immune to the Great Recession" – the scant evidence includes the fact that a Las Vegas branch of his 40/40 Club closed in 2008 – it still appears that, of those 99 problems, the chance of his Discover card being declined at Nobu ain't one. After leaving Def Jam Recordings in 2007, he signed a \$150 million deal with Live Nation. Of his non-musical investments, the most profitable has been his Rocawear clothing line, which he co-founded in 1999 with Damon Dash. In 2005, he bought out Dash's share of the company for \$30 million; two years later, he sold Rocawear to Iconix Brand Group for \$204 million, in a deal that allowed him to remain CEO. Since then, he's overseen the relaunch of the label, which included jettisoning the oversize logos and baggy Nineties-rap-video cuts. He also holds a stake in the New Jersey Nets, who this year came close to having the worst season in NBA history. For this reason, Jay says he hasn't been lobbying his friend LeBron James, the basketball superstar who will soon be a free agent, to join the team. "That's his decision," Jay-Z says. "We're friends – we've still gotta hang out! I don't want to convince somebody to do something, then have to see him and say, 'Uh, yeah, we're 4 and 30... sorry.'"

Lyor Cohen, vice chairman of Warner Music Group, has been friends with Jay since Cohen's days as president of Island Def Jam, which acquired a 50 percent stake of Jay's Roc-A-Fella Records in 1997. He says he introduced Jay to the idea of taking vacations – they traveled to Capri together – but that overall, "he hasn't changed that much. He's wiser. He's always been curious, but he has an even more profound curiosity now. One of my great moments at Coachella was driving backstage. He was driving the other way, and Beyoncé rolled her window down. They're beaming from ear to ear. I said, 'Where you guys going?' Jay said, 'Lyor, either jump in, or I'll check you out later – we can't miss the show we're running to now!' They were so excited by the other artists. After he saw Muse, he kept asking me for [singer] Matt Bellamy's e-mail – 'Wow, that was dynamic: the sound, the attention to detail.'"

As the Drake song continues, a stylish woman enters the office holding a gray Tom Ford suit. She's wearing designer overalls, a pair of oversize sunglasses and a silk scarf



CRAZY IN LOVE
Jay-Z and Beyoncé at Coachella in April. The couple hung out all weekend and caught Muse and Thom Yorke.

patterned with little tennis rackets and sailboats. “Oh,” she says, noticing me. “Do you want to do this somewhere else?”

“Nah,” Jay says, casually removing his pants. “It’s like a locker room in here.”

The woman, June Ambrose – Jay teasingly describes her as a “style architect” – shrugs. “I brought your tighty-whities,” she says, walking behind the desk. “Oh! You’re wearing them.”

Jay, pleased with himself, says, “I knew I’d be wearing a suit tonight.” He’s going to a function at the Four Seasons Hotel.

Ambrose squints at his lap. “The ones I brought are *tighty tighty-whities*, though,” she says.

Jay grabs the suit pants and says, “Come on, now. We don’t wanna make the guy *really* uncomfortable.”

After Jay slips on the pants, Ambrose holds up two ties, both gray with checked patterns. Jay chooses the darker tie. Ambrose frowns and says, “I think you should wear this other one. You haven’t worn it before, and there’ll be wire photographers. And it’s just bolder.” Jay shrugs and says, “OK. But they’re almost the same.” Ambrose says, “Well, to the pedestrian eye.” Jay, who has been buttoning his dress shirt, freezes and gives her a look. “I don’t have a pedestrian eye,” he says, only half-smiling. Ambrose holds up her hands

and says, “I misspoke! My tongue is doing crazy things today.”

Jay turns his attention back to the television as Ambrose, on her knees, slips on and ties his shoes (yanking up one of the tongues with a violent jerk), then rises to her feet to put on his tie. “Fat or medium?” she asks. She’s referring to the knot size. Jay chooses medium. “Medium balls today,” she says. “OK. You know, one of your friends was wearing a wool three-piece suit the other day.”

“Not one of *my* friends,” Jay says.

“A good friend,” she says, tauntingly. “And this is a guy who likes a good suit.”

“Oh, no!” Jay says.

“A wool pinstripe suit,” Ambrose says.

“Oh, no!” Jay says.

“Do you want two-piece or three-piece?” she asks, holding up a vest.

Jay looks at the vest and says, “Three might be better.” Glancing down, he adds, “Help hide this tie.”

JAY-Z! JAY-Z!”

If Jay-Z happens to get a late lunch at Bar Pitti, an open-air Italian restaurant in Greenwich Village, just as school is letting out, it’s like Omar walking through the Baltimore projects in *The Wire*, only in reverse – the kids aren’t run-

ning for cover but clustering on the sidewalk, mobs of 10-year-old girls in private-school uniforms and fancy backpacks calling the name of the man who asked, in one of his biggest hits, released a full two years before they were born, “Can I get a *fuck* you to these bitches from all of my niggas who don’t *love* ho’s, they get *no* dough?” Jay puts down his pinot grigio and smiles sweetly, giving the girls a little wave.

Jay moves in public with unusual languor. He laughs genuinely and often, and doesn’t hesitate to, say, pause directly in front of an attractive blond woman in sunglasses and remark, slowly, “Nice glasses.” As a young man, Jay famously sold drugs and found himself on both ends of a gun barrel, yet a large part of his appeal comes from his decidedly nonthreatening appearance. His broad features and slightly jowled profile have a soft, edgeless quality, the face of someone easily wounded. Even in early, gangsta-rap-era poses, when he’s scowling at the camera, *trying* to scare you, his eyes – huge, alert, voraciously taking in every detail – have the habit of giving the game away with their distracted intelligence.

Not that Jay reveals much in the way of weakness or imperfection on his records. In a classic example of form following function, the breathtaking dexterity of Jay-Z’s rhymes are almost always marshalled in the service of informing the listener of how great Jay-Z is. Some of the songs are peppered with details of backstory hardship (urban poverty, absent father, the drug violence of the Marcy projects), which mostly serve to make the ultimate triumph that much sweeter, a Horatio Alger story that Jay himself has tirelessly mythologized on every album. “I may have told, in my whole career, maybe 10 stories,” he admits. “I deal with the same topics [over and over] in different ways.” The average Jay-Z fan has never hit the same lows – has never, say, shot his own brother in the shoulder for stealing a ring, a true story Jay details on “You Must Love Me,” from his second album – nor will most listeners ever swim in the rare waters of Jay’s current world. Still, we love Jay-Z, for the same reason we hate taxes, any taxes, even those on the richest 1 percent – because America’s founding myth is aspirational. Jay-Z’s biography flatters our illusions about our own prospects, makes anything seem possible.

The waiter comes to take away the remains of Jay’s second arugula salad, which he ordered immediately after finishing his first. With both salads, he gingerly peeled off all but a single piece of Parmesan, which was sliced in thin squares and stacked atop the lettuce. Jay is wearing a thin gray cardigan over a white T-shirt, expensively distressed jeans and unlaced Timberland boots, the latter despite the fact that, on *The Blueprint 3* track “Off That,” Tims are clearly declared

"off," along with rims, Cris, oversize clothes and chains, black-versus-white, niggas still making it rain and (this last one seems unfair) "whatever you about to discover."

Many of the songs on *The Blueprint 3* seem obsessed with relevance and the notion of being ahead of certain trends. On the most recent single, "On to the Next One," Jay declares, "Fuck a throwback jersey 'cause we on to the next one, and fuck that Auto-Tune 'cause we on," a theme echoed in "D.O.A. [Death of Auto-Tune]," Jay's broadside on the voice-altering software favored by young rappers and R&B artists from T-Pain to his own friend Kanye West (who, on "D.O.A.," can be heard shouting, "It's too far, nigga!" in the background). There's also the legacy-obsessed "Young Forever," one of the weaker tracks on the album, which Jay recently dedicated to Betty White during a performance on *Saturday Night Live*—briefly obscuring that, in rap years, he's already practically Betty White's age, a fact Jay doesn't deny.

"One of the reasons I wanted to make *Blueprint 3* was because of the challenge," Jay says. "We've seen people like LL [Cool J] have longevity, and we respect the heritage of what he's done, but it's not like, right now, he's competing on the same level as Lil Wayne. So for me to still be able to compete at that level at my age, that's rarefied air. It's never been done."

"I think the problem with people, as they start to mature, they say, 'Rap is a young man's game,' and they keep trying to make young songs. But you don't know the slang—it changes every day. You can visit the topic, but these young kids live it every day, and you're just visiting. So you're trying to be something you're not, and the audience doesn't buy into that. And people wonder why. 'I made a great Southern bounce song!' You're from New York, and you're 70! Why are you bouncing?' I grew up in hip-hop. I don't want to stop listening to hip-hop when I'm 50 years old. But I don't want to listen to something I can't relate to. I can't relate to some guy in a big mansion telling me that he's going to shoot me. You're not believing that! He doesn't want to go to jail. He *likes* his house!"

Jay released his seminal debut, *Reasonable Doubt*, in 1996, when he was 26 years old. The album was a hit with hip-hop fans and critics, but it wasn't until he sampled the Broadway musical *Annie*, two years later, for the song "Hard Knock Life (Ghetto Anthem)," that he proved the capacity for crossover pop appeal. After a



The Many Worlds of Shawn Carter

(1) At the groundbreaking of the Nets' new Brooklyn arena with New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg, Gov. David Paterson (from left) and other New York officials.
(2) With early mentor Jaz-O in 1989.
(3) With friend LeBron James in 2009.



string of massive hits that included "Can I Get A..." and "Big Pimpin'," he decided to "hit the reset button" and recorded arguably the best album of his career, *The Blueprint*, in 2001. Leaning heavily on old soul samples (and featuring a young producer named Kanye West), the album "was like going back to my roots, to how I grew up," Jay says. "Other than 'H to the Izzo,' there's no real singles. It was like, 'Fuck, enough already—how many times are you going to make another "Big Pimpin'?"'"

In 2003, at the height of his popularity, Jay-Z released *The Black Album* and announced it would be his final recording. Soon after, he embarked on a disastrous tour with R. Kelly, on which the latter's erratic behavior included commandeering a McDonald's drive-through during a tour stop in St. Louis. (Today Jay says, "Didn't go well? That's the understatement of the year. I wanted to help him, and I'd tell him things that were maybe not my place to say. It was sad to see." The two haven't spoken since the tour's abrupt ending.) In 2004, Jay accepted the job as president of Def Jam. Though he speaks fondly of his time in the front office and points to numerous successes—he signed Rihanna, Ne-Yo and Young Jeezy and released hit albums by

Kanye West—when asked if he can remember specific meetings where he felt frustrated by the label's inability to change, he says, "Honestly? All of them. The culture there has been institutionalized. You had record executives who've been sitting in their office for 20 years because of one act. 'But that's the guy who signed Mötley Crüe!' Seriously? That was fucking 25 years ago."

"When you look at what's happening, the record business is purging itself," Jay continues. "Def Jam released 57 albums one year. Are there 57 good artists in the world, let alone on one label? If you have 57 artists and four of them break, that's bad business. What a terrible model. I told them, 'How about this idea—instead of spending \$300 million to break four acts, why don't you guys give me a credit line, and I'll just do things. I won't make music. I'll go buy some headphones, or buy a clothing line, just be part of the culture.' But the money scared them off, because they're not used to thinking in that way."

Despite the impossibility of changing an ossified record-business model overnight, Jay did manage a smooth transition into the world of the corporate boardroom, which makes one wonder if the experience changed his feelings about race in Ameri-

ca. Jay smiles diplomatically and says, "No, it didn't." He mentions Chris Rock's great stand-up bit about Alpine, New Jersey, the wealthy neighborhood where Jay used to live: "In my neighborhood, there are four black people," Rock said. "Hundreds of houses, four black people. Who are these black people? Well, there's me, Mary J. Blige, Jay-Z and Eddie Murphy. . . . Mary J. Blige, one of the greatest R&B singers to ever walk the Earth. Jay-Z, one of the greatest rappers to ever live. Eddie Murphy, one of the funniest actors to ever, ever do it. Do you know what the white man who lives next door to me does for a living? He's a fucking dentist!" Jay chuckles and, paraphrasing Rock, says, "He didn't discover teeth!" Twirling a forkful of pasta, Jay continues, "It's changing slowly. But it's not an equal thing. I'm here because of my talent. You still have to do extraordinary things."

AS WE EXIT JAY'S OFFICE building, passing under the stern glare of a bust of former Israeli prime minister Golda Meir, an unsmiling, shaved-headed bodyguard appears and opens the door of a black Cadillac Escalade parked on Broadway. The rear seats have been tilted so far back, it almost feels as if we're lying next to each other on beach chairs. Jay, not entirely surprisingly, turns out to be a backseat navigator. On an earlier ride, he began to give the chauffeur (who calls him "boss") his own directions to a photo studio. "Just keep going until you see the Richard Meier building," he commanded. The driver stared blankly in the rearview mirror. "The big glass building on the left," Jay said. "The architect is Richard Meier."

Tonight, as we drive the 12 blocks to the Four Seasons, Jay says, "You're going to meet a guy named François who's been a good friend and is the reason I'm doing this." François-Henry Bennahmias is the North American president of Audemars Piguet, the luxury Swiss watch brand; tonight, he's sponsoring a celebrity watch auction to benefit an AIDS charity. The auction is already under way when we're ushered to the front row and seated directly across the aisle from Kelsey Grammer, who beams at Jay's arrival. The rest of the well-heeled crowd also seems starstruck. A rich guy sitting behind us who looks a bit like Mickey Rourke has not silenced his cellphone, which goes off in the middle of the auction, blaring an "Empire State of Mind" ringtone. "Shawn! Shawn! Check it out!" the man brays, leaning forward and holding up his phone to a mortified Jay.

Jay picks up the price list, scans it, then elbows me and points out a limited-edition Lady Millenary Astrologia watch signed by Meryl Streep, with an estimated value of \$120,240. "I might bid on this one," he whispers. "They're giving 'em away in this

room." But when the lot goes up, the bids hit 70 grand within seconds. Frowning, Jay glances over and says, "This isn't going to work out for me." He ends up not bidding at all.

Jay's watch, a limited-edition Royal Oak Offshore Las Vegas Strip Tourbillon, with an estimated value of \$217,800, is the main event. When it's Jay's turn to say a few words, he acknowledges the other celebrities in the audience, including "Chelsea Grammer." Jay's watch ends up as the biggest seller of the evening, going for \$220,000. At the afterparty, the babyfaced actor and rapper Nick Cannon approaches Jay in the corner and says, "Man, you said *Chelsea Grammer*!" Jay says, "Really?!" Cannon, still laughing heartily, says, "I just about fell out of my seat! He rolled with it, though. I looked over and he was just smiling and clapping." Jay laughs, too, sorrowfully shaking his head.

Back in the Escalade, he turns to me and asks, "Did you hear me say *Chelsea Grammer*?"

"FOR ME TO BE ABLE TO COMPETE AT LIL WAYNE'S LEVEL AT MY AGE - THAT'S RAREFIED AIR," SAYS JAY-Z. "IT'S NEVER BEEN DONE."

"Yeah," I say, "but you said it pretty quickly, so I'm not sure that everyone necessarily caught it."

He frowns and shakes his head, seeming irritated with himself. "Nah. If *you* heard it, and *he* heard it, everyone heard it." As the Cadillac maneuvers through the downtown traffic, Jay begins typing a message to someone on his BlackBerry. Without looking up, he asks, "How do you spell 'faux pas'?"

THE DRIVER TAKES US TO Cipriani, an expensive Italian restaurant in Soho, not far from the 8,000-square-foot penthouse apartment where Jay and Beyoncé live. Jay personally oversaw the renovation of the space, a project that took him three years and an equal number of interior designers - something he says he'll never do again. A line in "Off That" refers to his "Tribeca loft" with its "highbrow art" (and "high-yellow broad"). Of that art, Jay's favorite pieces include the Andy Warhol Rorschach-blot painting hanging over the fireplace and a chalk-based piece called *Boombastic*, by the artist Gary Simmons, drawn directly on another wall. ("All of my walls are Venetian plaster, very quiet, but this one is *red*," Jay says.) Though Jay and Beyoncé maintain a strict policy of not discussing their relationship with the press, Jay does reveal

that B., as he calls her, vetoed a single piece of artwork. "This is gonna sound so cliché," Jay sighs. "You really have to *see* it." The piece was a surreal black-and-white photograph by the artist Laurie Simmons (no relation to Gary) depicting a noirishly lit pistol with a pair of women's legs emerging from the handle. "It was more of a masculine style, I guess," Jay acknowledges. Beyoncé sent it back and had it replaced with a similar Simmons piece, only depicting a perfume bottle instead of a gun.

At Cipriani, while I'm in the bathroom, Jay takes the liberty of ordering us both Bellinis, which makes me feel, briefly, like Beyoncé. He says he loved her appearance in Lady Gaga's outrageous "Telephone" video, which ends with the pair driving off like Thelma and Louise after poisoning a bunch of guests at a diner - though he denies advising her on whether to participate in the video in the first place. "We pretty much stay out of each other's business," he says. "Sometimes on creative stuff, one of us will ask, 'Do you think

this is cool?' She's a magnificent A&R, if she ever decides to do that, for things like pitch. So I defer to her on those sort of questions. But overall, we pretty much like the same things."

Beyoncé isn't the only off-limit topic for Jay. Though he completed an autobiography several years ago (co-written with Dream Hampton, a former editor of hip-hop magazine *The Source*), he refuses to release it, despite the deep interest and near-guaranteed success. "It's too much," he tells me. "For the book, I was interviewed, people close to me were interviewed. So I was learning a lot of things I didn't know as a child. And it was too . . ." He trails off, then continues, "It's not anything I haven't said in the past, in songs. It's just more detailed. A song is three minutes long. A book doesn't have to rhyme, and it has no time limit, so you can say exactly how everything went." He says the biggest revelation he had reading his own autobiography came in the parts about his father, who abandoned the family when Jay was 11. "It was still wrong, at the end of the day, that he left," Jay says, "but he did stick around at a time where it wasn't cool or popular - he married my mom at a time when guys were just leaving, and you'd never even *meet* your dad. So it made me ease up a little bit in how I felt about him."

Jay's never been to therapy. (Except for once, he says, lowering [*Cont. on 90*])



BAND OF BROTHERS

Bryce Dessner, Scott Devendorf, Bryan Devendorf, Matt Berninger and Aaron Dessner (from left) of the National, whose fifth LP is the group's bestselling yet.

GROOMING BY SARA GLICK AT ARTLIST USING TEMPTU



CLOSE-UP

The National

Darkness on the edge of Brooklyn:
Indie rockers crash the Top 10 with
angsty anthems for grown-ups

DURING A ROUGH PATCH AROUND the turn of the century, the National's frontman, Matt Berninger, spent many late nights in his Brooklyn apartment with headphones on his ears, a glass of wine in his hand and Nick Cave's dark, atmospheric albums as his only company. These are happier days for Berninger, 39, who's married with a year-old daughter – but anyone seeking a soundtrack for similarly melancholy evenings would do well with his band's past few albums. Their latest, *High Violet*, is a seductive collection of subtly surging anti-anthems, with evocative lyrics about the terrors and unexpected joys of adult life. "You have these fantasies of what it's like to grow up," says Berninger, who abandoned a lucrative career as a new-media creative director for the band. "But then you find out it's tough and awkward, and a lot of work is boring and depressing. I'm always coming to terms with these realizations."

High Violet debuted in the Top Five, quite a feat for a band whose richly textured, ever-shifting music – arranged, then rearranged, then torn apart over the course of months – takes a half-dozen listens to sink in. "If we could figure out how to write a Strokes song, we would," says Berninger. "But we embrace what we are."

The other four members of the National are two pairs of brothers: bassist Scott Devendorf and drummer Bryan Devendorf, along with guitarists and main composers Bryce and Aaron Dessner. The Dessners grapple with Berninger's poetic requests for things like "loose wool" guitars and try to entice him to begin his tortuous writing process. "It's almost like you're baiting this creature; you have to send him things that get him going," says Bryce, who has a master's degree in music from Yale – a sharp contrast with Berninger, who plays no instrument and knows zero music theory. "I'm not concerned if a song is reinventing anything musically," says Berninger. "Thankfully, they are – because if I were left to my own devices, I'd be making some really dumb, boring music." **BRIAN HIATT**

"If we could write a Strokes song, we would," says singer Matt Berninger.

PHOTOGRAPH BY MARK SQUIRES

JONATHAN HIATT doesn't GET MAD he gets EVEN

the SCAR, Grudges and Lightning wit of an
unlikely Leading MAN. By BRIAN HIATT
PHOTOGRAPH BY MARK SELIGER





ONAH HILL HASN'T thought of a joke yet, but he has plenty of time. He's headed for center stage at the Los Angeles stop of Conan O'Brien's theater tour, a big guy, moving fast, with a curious mix of swagger and caution – half-strutting, half-shuffling. A fuzzy beard has colonized his neck, and he's wearing an incongruous khaki trench coat, snug gray jeans and baggy blue shirt. O'Brien takes in the outfit and smirks. "I like your detective's raincoat," he says.

"I raped and murdered Inspector Gadget on the way here," Hill replies casually, and 6,000 people explode into startled laughter.

Hill has never been a stand-up comedian, but he has the mind of a great one – the joke assembled itself in his head, in under a second. "Conan says 'detective,' and he's waiting for a response," Hill explains the next day, his fierce blue eyes glittering behind chunky black glasses. "What famous person wears a jacket like this? You think of three, and pick the funniest. How did I get it from Inspector Gadget – did I beat him up? I raped and then murdered him. You have to think of the word combination and how it will sound rhythmically. It's weird that it all happens so fast. I don't know how I think of it."

"Jonah will just say it a second before anyone else does," says his friend Seth Rogen, who made Hill famous by casting him in the anarchically honest teen comedy *Superbad*. "Which is a big second. You make a lot of money from that second."

Hill's seething, bullshit-calling comic energy – which would have been at home in the original cast of *Saturday Night Live* – has already made him the funniest character actor of his generation: After *Superbad*, he proved himself capable of stealing whole movies with parts as small as *Forgetting Sarah Marshall*'s derangedly closeted superfan ("I just went from six to midnight," he says, lustfully watching Russell Brand sing). Now, with two wildly different starring roles in one month – he's a straight man to Brand's manic rock star in *Get Him to the Greek*, and Marisa Tomei's near-sociopathic, Oedipally inclined son in *Cyrus* – he's a picture-on-the-poster leading man.

Onscreen and in life, Hill is the guy who pops out with what everyone's thinking but doesn't have the nerve to say. He and Rogen were once at a studio meeting where an exec used the phrase "soup to nuts" 15 times, then asked if they had any questions. Hill looked at her and said, "I have one question. What the fuck does 'soup to nuts' mean?" Similarly, Hill im-

provoked the defining line of *Cyrus* during a dinner scene – turning to John C. Reilly, who plays a new boyfriend threatening the only relationship that matters to his character, he unleashes a movie-summarizing salvo: "Don't fuck my mom."

Taking on a character as dark and complex as *Cyrus* is an unexpectedly rapid leap forward for Hill – it's as if one of Hill's heroes, Adam Sandler, skipped *The Waterboy* and went straight to *Punch-Drunk Love*. "Jonah really sees how people tick," says Tomei. "It's not just about a gag line."

But unlike most other professionally funny people, Hill doesn't do self-deprecation. His humor is aggressive, directed outward. "I love young, angry, nerdy guys," says his mentor, Judd Apatow. "There's nothing more enjoyable than people who think that the world is denying them something and it's unfair and they're smart and funny and sexually insecure. And Jonah definitely expresses a lot of that rage well."

"Every teacher I ever had told me I was never going to be anything. You want to make them eat their words."

HILL SPENT MOST OF HIS LIFE being underestimated, and every slight he's ever experienced remains fresh to him, going back to elementary school in L.A. In the wake of *Superbad*'s success, his one indulgence was to go back and hook up with the girls who rejected him in his upscale private high school – not the *kind* of girls who rejected him, but the actual girls. A considerable number of Hill's anecdotes are about people who did him wrong, who did not recognize his talents. He points out that critics loved *Superbad* but failed to praise his performance, and even notes that his cameo in my 2007 Apatow profile in this magazine made him sound like "Judd's little butt-buddy" – adding, conciliatorily, "not that you wrote it that way."

Hill is supremely irritated by the perception that he's just like his characters – some kind of perma-stoned slacker. He's just the opposite: A workaholic who's in the process of building a mini-Apatovian empire – producing, writing and acting in multiple upcoming movies. "He has

more stuff going on than I do after 50 movies," says Reilly.

After *Superbad*, Hill turned down role after role, including a sidekick part in *Transformers 2*. "I didn't jump on a bunch of shitty movies when the iron was hot," he says. Instead, at the moment his acting career achieved maximum heat, he decided to audition for a writer-producer role on Sacha Baron Cohen's *Brüno*. He won the job by conceiving the most outrageous scene in a movie full of them: Bruno performing fellatio on the ghost of his dead lover, Rob from Milli Vanilli.

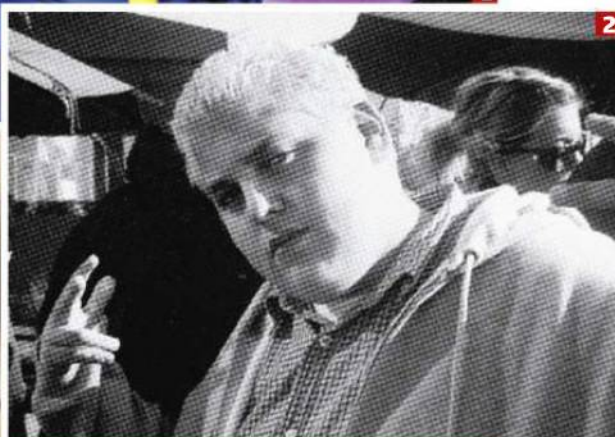
Hill says he's driven, but happy. "It's not like I'm some tortured dude or whatever," he says. Despite being rich and famous, he allows himself fewer pleasures than your average 26-year-old – avoiding Hollywood social life, not even buying himself a sports car ("a bad investment"). He keeps his loved ones close: He's tight with his cute 21-year-old girlfriend, Jordan, and is so cozy with his upper-middle-class parents (his dad is an accountant for rock bands) that he spent his pre-Conan hours having dinner and a Neil Young singalong at their house. He still hangs out with a group of old friends from as far back as elementary school.

Hill grew up wanting to be a writer on *The Simpsons* and swore off acting for years after his sixth-grade teacher wanted him to split the role of Elvis Presley with a cuter classmate in a big end-of-year show – despite the fact that 12-year-old Jonah had developed a manifestly awesome Elvis impersonation. "I went crazy," Hill says, "and I was like, 'No, fuck you, I'm not doing this, I'm never acting again.' It was bullshit. I was like, 'This is lame, you're not even a good actor.' And look what he's doing now, and look what I'm doing now."

During a brief stint at New York's New School, he rediscovered his childhood love of performing. After landing a tiny part in *I Heart Huckabees*, he dropped out and moved back to his parents' L.A. home to pursue it full-time. From there, he hit an endless series of brick walls. One was his own agent. "He was a total frat guy, he was mean," Hill recalls, breaking into a dumb-guy SoCal drawl: "You can't tell people I'm your agent, bro! What are you doing?"

When Hill auditioned for sitcoms, he'd rewrite the scripts on the fly. "It turns out guys who make 5 million bucks a year writing sitcoms don't like an unemployed 18-year-old dude rewriting their jokes," he says. "But if they were smart, they would have listened to someone improvising and making their jokes funnier."

In Apatow, Hill found someone smart enough to listen. "When I met Judd, things felt right for the first time in my life, where I was like, 'Oh, my God, I'm home.'" He owes much of his career to the virtuosic show he put on for Apatow during filming of *The 40-Year-Old Virgin*, spitballing



L.A. Story

(1) Jonah Hill and Conan O'Brien onstage, where Hill explained his trench coat: "I raped and murdered Inspector Gadget on the way here." (2) As a teenager growing up in L.A. (3) On the set of *Cyrus*.

doesn't make you funnier or less funnier – it's ridiculous, man, it's totally ridiculous," Hill says slowly. "Why does that joke in a movie have anything to do with me personally? It's not me, it's a guy in a movie."

THERE'S AN OLD, ANGRY SCAR on Hill's right arm that spiders past his elbow – too big and deep to hide. It looks like his arm was torn in half and then pulled back together, which is more or less what happened. "This is one of the biggest things ever in my life," says Hill.

When Hill was in middle school, his mom was battling cancer. Convinced that she was going to die, he started acting out (she's since made a full recovery). He took up skateboarding, started smoking weed. His grades were bad. "I was, like, not a good kid," he says.

Hill was 15 when it all came to a head. He and a friend snuck out one night in an SUV.

Hill stuck his elbow out the open window as they headed into the night, and his friend started turning the wheel back and forth, joking around. The car flipped over, skidded along the road and dragged Hill's arm with it.

Hill woke up in the hospital, and he heard two doctors discussing whether or not to amputate his arm. At the same time, he saw his dad and ailing mom crying. "I said to myself, 'I'll never let them down ever again.' I said, 'I'm going to be fuckin' successful. I'm going to resurrect what I put these people through by being a little asshole.' So I look at this scar every day. That reminds me to work hard."

Hill also has other, less-visible scars. "Every teacher I ever had told me I was never going to be anything," he recalls.

In 10th grade, Hill moved from one private school to another, where he was much happier – except for the fact that one of his least-favorite teachers happened to make the same switch. He was horrified. "She showed up, and I was like, 'What are you doing here?' She sucked, she made me sad. She's probably the reason I didn't believe in myself. You want to make all these teachers eat their words."

Years later, not long after *Superbad*, Hill spotted the same teacher in Santa Monica. "Every emotion came rushing back to me, but I was like, 'I'm going to be an adult, I'm going to be responsible.'" But then the teacher came up to him and acted like she'd always been Hill's biggest fan and supporter. "I knew you were going to be successful, I knew it," she told him.

As always, Jonah Hill figured out the right thing to say. He looked his old teacher in the eyes. "Go fuck yourself, lady," Hill told her, then turned and strolled away. **2**

jokes in what was supposed to be a one-line appearance as "Ebay Store Customer." "In the riffs, Jonah would get madder and madder at Catherine Keener," recalls Apatow, "until he would say things like, 'Enjoy your fucking bankruptcy.' That's when we all fell in love with him."

For now, the headquarters of Hill's still-unnamed production company is his house, a sunny, OCD-neat rental a couple of miles outside Hollywood. Over one fireplace hangs a vintage black-and-white photo of Neil Young; over another, a similar portrait of Steve Martin. A collection of his favorite screenplays – *Adaptation*, *The Squid and the Whale*, *The Truman Show*, *Pulp Fiction*, *Sideways* – sits on his bookcase near a collection of Woody Allen interviews and Martin's short-story collection *Cruel Shoes*. Nearby is a treasure given to him by a prop guy he knows: *Old Custer*, the book written by Owen Wilson's character in *The Royal Tenenbaums*.

In his office, Hill has hung photos from his *SNL* hosting slot ("People come in and they're like, 'Look at this douche bag hanging pictures of himself'"). On his desk is a brand-new iPad, with its screen saver set to a painting of a fisherman with two dogs – it appears in *Goodfellas* as the work of the Joe Pesci character's mother, who feeds the gangsters dinner while a dead body cools in their trunk. "People are like, 'Oh, man, like, what's your favor-

ite influence? Like, *Airplane* or whatever?' And I'm like, 'No, *Goodfellas* is my biggest influence.' It's really, really tense and really scary and really realistic, and then it's funny again, then it's scary again."

This morning, Hill woke up and did 45 minutes of cardio in the little gym he's set up across from his pool. Breakfast was oatmeal from the delivery service that's providing his meals lately. He's dropped 15 pounds in the past two months.

The weight thing appears to be a perfectionist's one obligatory flaw, and he's started to look seriously at the lifelong issue for the first time. "When I get stressed, I put on weight," he says. "People are embarrassed to talk about things like that, but I think it's fuckin' cool and it's being an adult to be like, 'Yeah, I gotta work on something.' It's supersimple. I'm now making this a priority in my life. I never thought about what I ate, and I just didn't work out a lot. . . . Seth did it. I was really proud of him."

He says all this calmly, matter-of-factly. A few hours later, though, I bring up the scene in *Funny People* where his comedian character mocks Rogen for losing weight: "There's nothing funny about a physically fit man. . . . No one wants to see Lance Armstrong do comedy." Hill's eyes turn ice-cold, offering a glimpse of what *Cyrus* co-director Mark Duplass calls "a thousand-yard stare that can kill a yak." "If you're really skinny or if you're really big, it



THE SPILL, THE AND THE PRESI

ON MAY 27TH, MORE than a month into the worst environmental disaster in U.S. history, Barack Obama strode to the podium in the East Room of the White House. For weeks, the administration had been insisting that BP alone was to blame for the catastrophic oil spill in the Gulf – and the ongoing failure to stop the massive leak. “They have the technical expertise to plug the hole,” White House spokesman Robert Gibbs had said only six days earlier. “It is their responsibility.” The president, Gibbs added, lacked the

authority to play anything more than a supervisory role – a curious line of argument from an administration that has reserved the right to assassinate American citizens abroad and has nationalized much of the auto industry. “If BP is not accomplishing the task, can you just federalize it?” a reporter asked. “No,” Gibbs replied.

Now, however, the president was suddenly standing up to take command of the cleanup effort. “In case you were wondering who’s responsible,” Obama told the nation, “I take responsibility.” Sounding chastened, he acknowledged that his administration had failed to adequately re-

form the Minerals Management Service, the scandal-ridden federal agency that for years had essentially allowed the oil industry to self-regulate. “There wasn’t sufficient urgency,” the president said. “Absolutely I take responsibility for that.” He also admitted that he had been too credulous of the oil giants: “I was wrong in my belief that the oil companies had their act together when it came to worst-case scenarios.” He unveiled a presidential commission to investigate the disaster, discussed the resignation of the head of MMS, and extended a moratorium on new deep-water drilling. “The buck,” he reiterated the

LARRY DOWNING/REUTERS/LANDOV

CRUDE AWAKENING

Obama surveys damage from the BP spill on the Louisiana coast on May 28th.



SCANDAL DENT

The inside story of how Obama failed to crack down on the corruption of the Bush years – and let the world's most dangerous oil company get away with murder

By Tim Dickinson

next day on the sullied Louisiana coastline, “stops with me.”

What didn't stop was the gusher. Hours before the president's press conference, an ominous plume of oil six miles wide and 22 miles long was discovered snaking its way toward Mobile Bay from BP's wellhead next to the wreckage of its Deepwater Horizon rig. Admiral Thad Allen, the U.S. commander overseeing the cleanup, framed the spill explicitly as an invasion: “The enemy is coming ashore,” he said. Louisiana beaches were assaulted by blobs of oil that began to seep beneath the sand; acres of marshland at the “Bird's Foot,” where the

Mississippi meets the Gulf, were befouled by shit-brown crude – a death sentence for wetlands that serve as the cradle for much of the region's vital marine life. By the time Obama spoke, it was increasingly evident that this was not merely an ecological disaster. It was the most devastating assault on American soil since 9/11.

Like the attacks by Al Qaeda, the disaster in the Gulf was preceded by ample warnings – yet the administration had ignored them. Instead of cracking down on MMS, as he had vowed to do even before taking office, Obama left in place many of the top officials who oversaw the agency's

culture of corruption. He permitted it to rubber-stamp dangerous drilling operations by BP – a firm with the worst safety record of any oil company – with virtually no environmental safeguards, using industry-friendly regulations drafted during the Bush years. He calibrated his response to the Gulf spill based on flawed and misleading estimates from BP – and then deployed his top aides to lowball the flow rate at a laughable 5,000 barrels a day, long after the best science made clear this catastrophe would eclipse the *Exxon Valdez*.

Even after the president's press conference, *ROLLING STONE* has learned, the

administration knew the spill could be far worse than its “best estimate” acknowledged. That same day, the president’s Flow Rate Technical Group – a team of scientists charged with establishing the gusher’s output – announced a new estimate of 12,000 to 25,000 barrels, based on calculations from video of the plume. In fact, according to interviews with team members and scientists familiar with its work, that figure represents the plume group’s *minimum* estimate. The upper range was not included in their report because scientists analyzing the flow were unable to reach a consensus on how bad it could be. “The upper bound from the plume group, if it had come out, is very high,” says Timothy Crone, a marine geophysicist at Columbia University who has consulted with the government’s team. “That’s why they had resistance internally. We’re talking 100,000 barrels a day.”

The median figure for Crone’s independent calculations is 55,000 barrels a day – the equivalent of an *Exxon Valdez* every five days. “That’s what the plume team’s numbers show too,” Crone says. A source privy to internal discussions at one of the world’s top oil companies confirms that the industry privately agrees with such estimates. “The industry definitely believes the higher-end values,” the source says.

drawing 200,000 barrels a day from the seafloor, Atlantis is located only 150 miles off the coast of Louisiana, in waters nearly 2,000 feet deeper than BP drilled at Deepwater Horizon. According to congressional documents, the platform lacks required engineering certification for as much as 90 percent of its subsea components – a flaw that internal BP documents reveal could lead to “catastrophic” errors. In a May 19th letter to Salazar, 26 congressmen called for the rig to be shut down immediately. “We are very concerned,” they wrote, “that the tragedy at Deepwater Horizon could foreshadow an accident at BP Atlantis.”

The administration’s response to the looming threat? According to an e-mail to a congressional aide from a staff member at MMS, the agency has had “zero contact” with Atlantis about its safety risks since the Deepwater rig went down.

IT’S TEMPTING TO BELIEVE THAT the Gulf spill, like so many disasters inherited by Obama, was the fault of the Texas oilman who preceded him in office. But, though George W. Bush paved the way for the catastrophe, it was Obama who gave BP the green light to drill. “Bush owns eight years of the mess,” says Rep. Darrell Issa, a Republican from

they wanted, they got. Nothing was being enforced across the board at MMS.”

Salazar himself has worked hard to foster the impression that the “prior administration” is to blame for the catastrophe. In reality, though, the Obama administration was fully aware from the outset of the need to correct the lapses at MMS that led directly to the disaster in the Gulf. In fact, Obama specifically nominated Salazar – his “great” and “dear” friend – to force the department to “clean up its act.” For too long, Obama declared, Interior has been “seen as an appendage of commercial interests” rather than serving the people. “That’s going to change under Ken Salazar.”

Salazar took over Interior in January 2009, vowing to restore the department’s “respect for scientific integrity.” He immediately traveled to MMS headquarters outside Denver and delivered a beat-down to staffers for their “blatant and criminal conflicts of interest and self-dealing” that had “set one of the worst examples of corruption and abuse in government.” Promising to “set the standard for reform,” Salazar declared, “The American people will know the Minerals Management Service as a defender of the taxpayer. You are the ones who will make special interests play by the rules.” Dressed in his trademark Stetson

BP HAS RECEIVED ALL BUT ONE OF THE 761 CITATIONS ISSUED AGAINST OIL REFINERS FOR “EGREGIOUS” SAFETY VIOLATIONS.

“That’s accurate – if not more than that.” The reason, he adds, is that BP appears to have unleashed one of the 10 most productive wells in the Gulf. “BP screwed up a really big, big find,” the source says. “And if they can’t cap this, it’s not going to blow itself out anytime soon.”

Even worse, the “moratorium” on drilling announced by the president does little to prevent future disasters. The ban halts exploratory drilling at only 33 deepwater operations, shutting down less than one percent of the total wells in the Gulf. Interior Secretary Ken Salazar, the Cabinet-level official appointed by Obama to rein in the oil industry, boasts that “the moratorium is not a moratorium that will affect production” – which continues at 5,106 wells in the Gulf, including 591 in deep water.

Most troubling of all, the government has allowed BP to continue deep-sea production at its Atlantis rig – one of the world’s largest oil platforms. Capable of

California. “But after more than a year on the job, Salazar owns it too.”

During the Bush years, the Minerals Management Service, the agency in the Interior Department charged with safeguarding the environment from the ravages of drilling, descended into rank criminality. According to reports by Interior’s inspector general, MMS staffers were both literally and figuratively in bed with the oil industry. When agency staffers weren’t joining industry employees for coke parties or trips to corporate ski chalets, they were having sex with oil-company officials. But it was American taxpayers and the environment that were getting screwed. MMS managers were awarded cash bonuses for pushing through risky offshore leases, auditors were ordered not to investigate shady deals, and safety staffers routinely accepted gifts from the industry, allegedly even allowing oil companies to fill in their own inspection reports in pencil before tracing over them in pen.

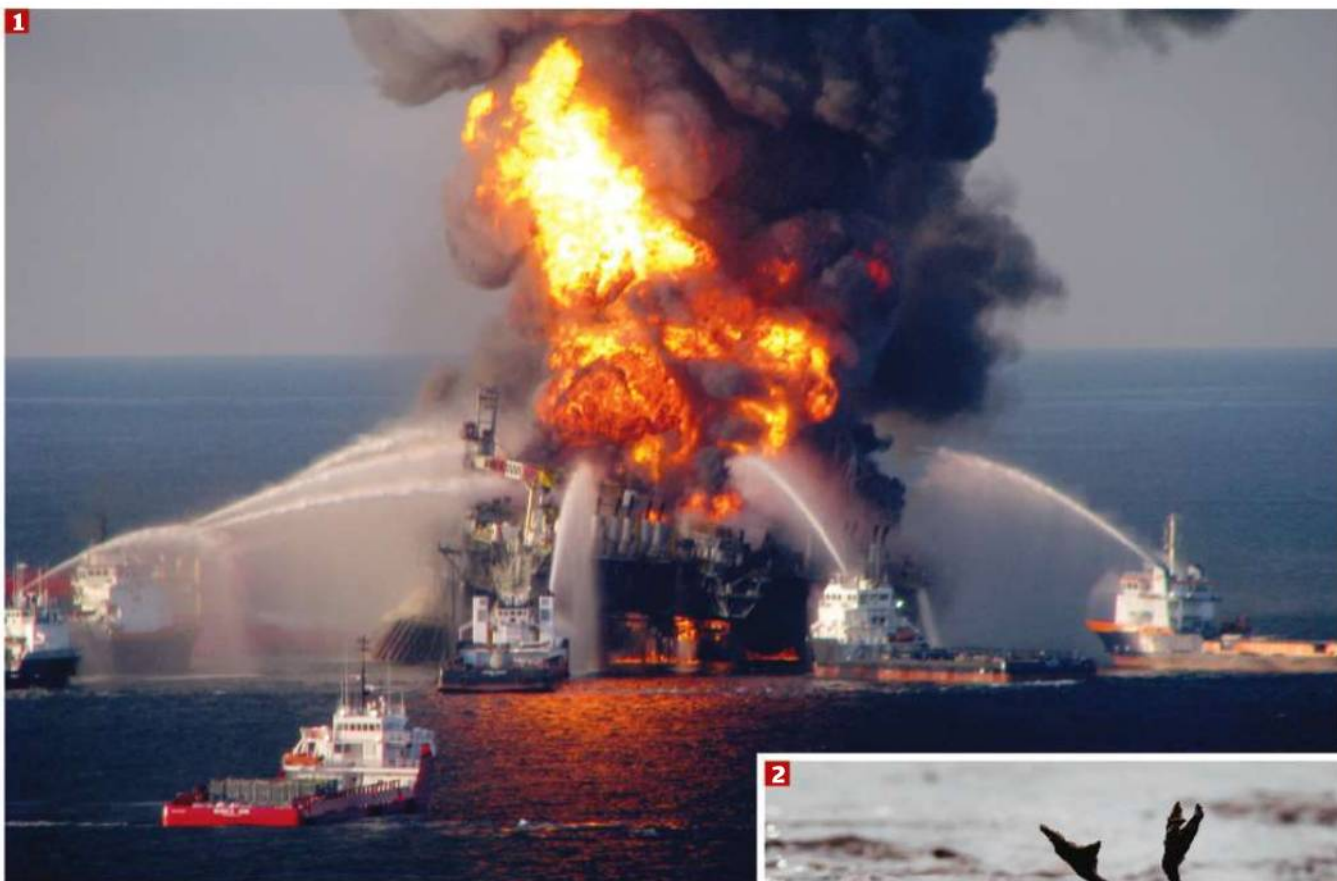
“The oil companies were running MMS during those years,” Bobby Maxwell, a former top auditor with the agency, told *ROLLING STONE* last year. “Whatever

and bolo tie, Salazar boldly proclaimed, “There’s a new sheriff in town.”

Salazar’s early moves certainly created the impression that he meant what he said. Within days of taking office, he jettisoned the Bush administration’s plan to open 300 million acres – in Alaska, the Gulf, and up and down both coasts – to offshore drilling. The proposal had been published in the *Federal Register* literally at midnight on the day that Bush left the White House. Salazar denounced the plan as “a headlong rush of the worst kind,” saying it would have put in place “a process rigged to force hurried decisions based on bad information.” Speaking to *ROLLING STONE* in March 2009, the secretary underscored his commitment to reform. “We have embarked on an ambitious agenda to clean up the mess,” he insisted. “We have the inspector general involved with us in a preventive mode so that the department doesn’t commit the same mistakes of the past.” The crackdown, he added, “goes beyond just codes of ethics.”

Except that it didn’t. Salazar did little to tamp down on the lawlessness at MMS, beyond referring a few employ-

Contributing editor TIM DICKINSON wrote about Ken Salazar in RS 1076. Additional reporting by Anna Lenzer and contributing editor Jeff Goodell.



"The Enemy Is Coming Ashore"

The government's failure to crack down on offshore drilling has devastated the Gulf Coast. **(1)** Fireboats on April 21st, battling the blaze that killed 11 workers and sank BP's Deepwater Horizon rig. **(2)** A seabird covered in oil on the Louisiana coast. **(3)** Oil fouls the nests of hundreds of pelicans in Barataria Bay.

ees for criminal prosecution and ending a Bush-era program that allowed oil companies to make their "royalty" payments – the amount they owe taxpayers for extracting a scarce public resource – not in cash but in crude. And instead of putting the brakes on new offshore drilling, Salazar immediately throttled it up to record levels. Even though he had scrapped the Bush plan, Salazar put 53 million offshore acres up for lease in the Gulf in his first year alone – an all-time high. The aggressive leasing came as no surprise, given Salazar's track record. "This guy has a long, long history of promoting offshore oil drilling – that's his thing," says Kieran Suckling, executive director of the Center for Biological Diversity. "He's got a highly specific soft spot for offshore oil drilling." As a sena-

tor, Salazar not only steered passage of the Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act, which opened 8 million acres in the Gulf to drilling, he even criticized President Bush for not forcing oil companies to develop existing leases faster.

Salazar was far less aggressive, however, when it came to making good on his promise to fix MMS. Though he criticized the actions of "a few rotten apples" at the agency, he left long-serving lackeys of the oil industry in charge. "The people that are ethically challenged are the career managers, the people who come up through the ranks," says a marine biologist who left the agency over the way science was tampered with by top officials. "In order to get promoted at MMS, you better get invested in this pro-development oil culture." One of the Bush-

era managers whom Salazar left in place was John Goll, the agency's director for Alaska. Shortly after, the Interior secretary announced a reorganization of MMS in the wake of the Gulf disaster, Goll called a staff meeting and served cake decorated with the words "Drill, baby, drill."

Salazar also failed to remove Chris Oynes, a top MMS official who had been a central figure in a multibillion-dollar scandal that Interior's inspector general called "a jaw-dropping example of bureaucratic bungling." In the 1990s, industry lobbyists secured a sweetheart subsidy from Congress: Drillers would pay no royalties on oil extracted in deep water until prices rose above \$28 a barrel. But this tripwire was conveniently omitted in Gulf leases overseen by Oynes – a mistake that will let the

oil giants pocket as much as \$53 billion. Instead of being fired for this fuckup, however, Oynes was promoted by Bush to become associate director for offshore drilling – a position he kept under Salazar until the Gulf disaster hit.

“Employees describe being in Interior – not just MMS, but the other agencies – as the third Bush term,” says Jeff Ruch, executive director of Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility, which represents federal whistle-blowers. “They’re working for the same managers who are implementing the same policies. Why would you expect a different result?”

THE TALE OF THE DEEPWATER Horizon disaster is, at its core, the tale of two blowout preventers: one mechanical, one regulatory. The regulatory blowout preventer failed long before BP ever started to drill – precisely because Salazar kept in place the crooked environmental guidelines the Bush administration implemented to favor the oil industry.

MMS has fully understood the worst-case scenarios for deep-sea oil blowouts for more than a decade. In May 2000, an environmental assessment for deepwater drilling in the Gulf presciently warned that “spill responses may be complicated by the potential for very large magnitude spills (because of the high production rates associated with deepwater wells).” The report noted that the oil industry “has estimated worst-case spill volumes ranging from 5,000 to 116,000 barrels a day for 120 days,” and it even anticipated the underwater plumes of oil that are currently haunting the Gulf: “Oil released subsea

(e.g., subsea blowout or pipeline leak) in these deepwater environments could remain submerged for some period of time and travel away from the spill site.” The report ominously concluded, “There are few practical spill-response options for dealing with submerged oil.”

That same month, an MMS research document developed with deepwater drillers – including the company then known as BP Amoco – warned that such a spill could spell the end for offshore operations. The industry could “ill afford a deepwater blowout,” the document cautions, adding that “no single company has the solution” to such a catastrophe. “The real test will come if a deepwater blowout occurs.”

Enter the Bush administration. Rather than heeding such warnings, MMS simply assumed that a big spill couldn’t happen. “There was a complete failure to even contemplate the possibility of a disaster like the one in the Gulf,” says Holly Doremus, an environmental-law expert at the University of California. “In their thinking, a big spill would be something like 5,000 barrels, and the oil wouldn’t even reach the shoreline.” In fact, Bush’s five-year plan for offshore drilling described a “large oil spill” as no more than 1,500 barrels. In April 2007, an environmental assessment covering the area where BP would drill concluded that blowouts were “low probability and low risk,” even though a test funded by MMS had found that blowout preventers failed 28 percent of the time. And an environmental assessment for BP’s lease block concluded that offshore spills “are not expected to damage significantly any wetlands along the Gulf Coast.”

In reality, MMS had little way to assess the risk to wildlife, since a new policy instituted under Bush scrapped environmental analysis and fast-tracked permits. Declaring that oil companies themselves were “in the best position to determine the environmental effects” of drilling, the new rules pre-qualified deep-sea drillers to receive a “categorical exclusion” – an exemption from environmental review that was originally intended to prevent minor projects, like outhouses on hiking trails, from being tied up in red tape. “There’s no analytical component to a cat-ex,” says a former MMS scientist. “You have technicians, not scientists, that are simply checking boxes to make sure all the T’s are crossed. They just cut and paste from previous approvals.”

Nowhere was the absurdity of the policy more evident than in the application that BP submitted for its Deepwater Horizon well only two months after Obama took office. BP claims that a spill is “unlikely” and states that it anticipates “no adverse impacts” to endangered wildlife or fisheries. Should a spill occur, it says, “no significant adverse impacts are expected” for the region’s beaches, wetlands and coastal nesting birds. The company, noting that such elements are “not required” as part of the application, contains no scenario for a potential blowout, and no site-specific plan to respond to a spill. Instead, it cites an Oil Spill Response Plan that it had prepared for the entire Gulf region. Among the sensitive species BP anticipates protecting in the semitropical Gulf? “Walrus” and other cold-water mammals, including sea otters and sea lions. The mistake appears to be the result of a sloppy cut-and-paste job from BP’s drilling plans for the

“WE NEED CEOS IN HANDCUFFS”

Louisiana native and Clinton strategist James Carville blasts Obama’s handling of the BP crisis

First Katrina, now BP. Do you have any theories about why the Gulf region keeps having such bad luck?

I don’t have a theory, I have an ironclad fact – and the fact is shitty engineering. If you put shoddy, half-assed engineers in a volatile place, the results are going to be disastrous.

What should Obama have done from Day One?

If FDR had been president, he would have jumped out of his wheelchair and *ran* to Louisiana. It’s the perfect display of why this country needs the Democratic Party – and it sure needs a more invigorated one than this. If the Democratic Party is not standing up for 11 workers murdered by a multinational corporation, not to mention tens of thousands of fishermen, then why have one? Just reset the whole deal – I’m serious.

So he should have gone after BP more aggressively?

I want this coast rebuilt, and if it bankrupts BP, fine. Frankly, I would also consider firing Ken Salazar. Take some responsibility. Say, “Enough wasn’t done. This is a new day.”

Should this be the end of drilling in the Gulf?

I’m not anti-drilling. I just want it to be well-regulated. I’m not anti-flying, either, but I damn sure want planes to be safe.

But how do you make drilling safe, given the oil industry’s influence over regulators?

Criminal prosecution. There’s nothing that will make a company safer than watching another CEO in handcuffs. If that happens, you’ll have hotels on drilling rigs, it will be so safe.

Why do you think the president took so long to call in the Justice Department?

I have no idea, I really don’t. Every law professor I talk to says, “Look, you have a slam-dunk criminal case on the environmental stuff.” Not to mention manslaughter and negligent homicide. This president, the day he does that, I’ll lead a parade for him.

That’s the only way that we’re going to get justice here. I can tell you right now, Mr. Tony Hayward, the CEO of BP, will not fare well in a Louisiana prison, if you get my drift. He’ll have three cellmates: Studly, Muley and Big Boy.

Is this Obama’s Katrina, as some critics have charged?

There’s nothing that Obama’s done that’s close to what Bush did after Katrina, in terms of detachment and negligence. But I’m still not happy with the response. “Better than Bush” is not a sufficient answer to me.

TIM DICKINSON



Arctic. Even worse: Among the "primary equipment providers" for "rapid deployment of spill response resources," BP inexplicably provides the Web address of a Japanese home-shopping network. Such glaring errors expose the 582-page response "plan" as nothing more than a paperwork exercise. "It was clear that nobody read it," says Ruch, who represents government scientists.

"This response plan is not worth the paper it is written on," said Rick Steiner, a retired professor of marine science at the University of Alaska who helped lead the scientific response to the *Valdez* disaster. "Incredibly, this voluminous document never once discusses how to stop a deep-water blowout."

Scientists like Steiner had urgently tried to alert Obama to the depth of the rot at MMS. "I talked to the transition team," Steiner says. "I told them that MMS was a disaster and needed to be seriously reformed." A top-to-bottom restructuring of MMS didn't require anything more than Ken Salazar's will: The agency only exists by order of the Interior secretary. "He had full authority to change anything he wanted," says Rep. Issa, a longtime critic of MMS. "He didn't use it." Even though Salazar knew that the environmental risks of offshore drilling had been covered up under Bush, he failed to order new assessments. "They could have said, 'We cannot conclude there won't be significant impacts from drilling until we redo those reviews,'" says Brendan Cummings, senior counsel for the Center for Biological Diversity. "But the oil industry would have cried foul. And what we've seen with Salazar is that when the oil industry squeaks, he retreats."

Under Salazar, MMS continued to issue categorical exclusions to companies like BP, even when they lacked the necessary permits to protect endangered species. A preliminary review of the BP disaster conducted by scientists with the independent Deepwater Horizon Study Group concludes that MMS failed to enforce a host of environmental laws, including the Clean Water Act. "MMS and Interior are equally responsible for the failures here," says the former agency scientist. "They weren't willing to take the regulatory steps that could have prevented this incident."

Had MMS been following the law, it would never have granted BP a categorical exclusion – which are applicable only to activities that have "no significant effect on the human environment." At a recent hearing, Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse grilled Salazar about Interior's own handbook on categorical exclusions, which bars their issuance for offshore projects in "relatively untested deep water" or "utilizing new or unusual technology" – standards that Whitehouse called "plainly pertinent" for BP's rig. "It's hard for me to see that that's a determination that could have been made in good faith," Whitehouse said, not-

ing that the monstrously complex task of drilling for oil a mile beneath the surface of the ocean appeared to have been given less oversight than is required of average Americans rewiring their homes. "Who was watching?"

Not the Interior secretary. Salazar did not even ensure that MMS had a written manual – required under Interior's own rules – for complying with environmental laws. According to an investigation in March by the Government Accountability Office, MMS managers relied instead on informal "institutional knowledge" – passed down from the Bush administration. The sole written guidance appeared on a website that only provided, according



BUSH'S BOYS
Obama left
Chris Oynes
(top) and John
Goll in charge
at MMS.

to the report, "one paragraph about assessing environmental impacts of oil and gas activities, not detailed instructions that could lead an analyst through the process of drafting an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement."

"People are being really circumspect, not pointing the finger at Salazar and Obama," says Rep. Raul Grijalva, who oversees the Interior Department as chair of the House subcommittee on public lands. "But the troublesome point is, the administration knew that it had this rot in the middle of the process on offshore drilling – yet it empowered an already discredited, disgraced agency to essentially be in charge."

On April 6th of last year, less than a month after BP submitted its application, MMS gave the oil giant the go-ahead to drill in the Gulf without a comprehensive environmental review. The one-page ap-

proval put no restrictions on BP, issuing only a mild suggestion that would prove prescient: "Exercise caution while drilling due to indications of shallow gas."

BP IS THE LAST OIL COMPANY on Earth that Salazar and MMS should have allowed to regulate itself. The firm is implicated in each of the worst oil disasters in American history, dating back to the *Exxon Valdez* in 1989. At the time, BP directed the industry consortium that bungled the cleanup response to *Valdez* during the fateful early hours of the spill, when the worst of the damage occurred. Vital equipment was buried under snow, no cleanup ship was standing by and no containment barge was available to collect skimmed oil. Exxon, quickly recognizing what still seems to elude the Obama administration, quickly shunted BP aside and took control of the spill.

In March 2006, BP was responsible for an Alaska pipeline rupture that spilled more than 250,000 gallons of crude into Prudhoe Bay – at the time, a spill second in size only to the *Valdez* disaster. Investigators found that BP had repeatedly ignored internal warnings about corrosion brought about by "draconian" cost cutting. The company got off cheap in the spill: While the EPA recommended slapping the firm with as much as \$672 million in fines, the Bush administration allowed it to settle for just \$20 million.

BP has also cut corners at the expense of its own workers. In 2005, 15 workers were killed and 170 injured after a tower filled with gasoline exploded at a BP refinery in Texas. Investigators found that the company had flouted its own safety procedures and illegally shut off a warning system before the blast. An internal cost-benefit analysis conducted by BP – explicitly based on the children's tale *The Three Little Pigs* – revealed that the oil giant had considered making buildings at the refinery blast-resistant to protect its workers (the pigs) from an explosion (the wolf). BP knew lives were on the line: "If the wolf blows down the house, the piggy is gobbled." But the company determined it would be cheaper to simply pay off the families of dead pigs.

After the blast, BP pleaded guilty to a felony, paying \$50 million to settle a criminal investigation and another \$21 million for violating federal safety laws. But the fines failed to force BP to change its ways. In October, Labor Secretary Hilda Solis hit the company with a proposed \$87 million in new fines – the highest in history – for continued safety violations at the same facility. Since 2007, according to analysis by the Center for Public Integrity, BP has received 760 citations for "egregious and willful" safety violations – those "committed with plain indifference to or intentional disregard

for employee safety and health." The rest of the oil industry combined has received a total of one.

The company applied the same deadly cost-cutting mentality to its oil rig in the Gulf. BP, it is important to note, is less an oil company than a bank that finances oil exploration; unlike ExxonMobil, which owns most of the equipment it uses to drill, BP contracts out almost everything. That includes the Deepwater Horizon rig that it leased from a firm called Transocean. BP shaved \$500,000 off its overhead by deploying a blowout preventer without a remote-control trigger – a fail-safe measure required in many countries but not mandated by MMS, thanks to intense industry lobbying. It opted to use cheap, single-walled piping for the well, and installed only six of the 21 cement spacers recommended by its contractor, Halliburton – decisions that significantly increased the risk of a severe explosion. It also skimped on critical testing that could have shown whether explosive gas was getting into the system as it was being cemented, and began removing mud that protected the well before it was sealed with cement plugs.

ing until more scientific studies could be conducted.

Undeterred, Obama and Salazar appeared together at Andrews Air Force Base on March 31st to introduce the plan. The stagecraft was pure Rove in its technicolor militaristic patriotism. The president's podium was set up in front of the cockpit of an F-18, flanked by a massive American flag. "We are not here to do what is easy," Salazar declared. "We are here to do what is right." He insisted that his reforms at MMS were working: "We are making decisions based on sound information and sound science." The president, for his part, praised Salazar as "one of the finest secretaries of Interior we've ever had" and stressed that his administration had studied the drilling plan for more than a year. "This is not a decision that I've made lightly," he said. Two days later, he issued an even more sweeping assurance. "It turns out, by the way, that oil rigs today generally don't cause spills," the president said. "They are technologically very advanced."

Eighteen days later, on the eve of the 40th anniversary of Earth Day, the Deepwater Horizon rig went off like a bomb.



BP'S RESPONSE PLAN – CUT AND PASTED FROM ITS PLAN FOR THE ARCTIC – WAS SO SLOPPY THAT IT PROMISED TO PROTECT WALRUSES IN THE GULF.

As BP was cutting corners aboard the rig, the Obama administration was plotting the greatest expansion of offshore drilling in half a century. In 2008, as prices at the pump neared \$5 a gallon, President Bush had lifted an executive moratorium on offshore drilling outside the Gulf that had been implemented by his father following the *Exxon Valdez*. On the campaign trail, Obama had stressed that offshore drilling "will not make a real dent in current gas prices or meet the long-term challenge of energy independence." But once in office, he bowed to the politics of "drill, baby, drill." Hoping to use oil as a bargaining chip to win votes for climate legislation in Congress, Obama unveiled an aggressive push for new offshore drilling in the Arctic, the Southeastern seaboard and new waters in the Gulf, closer to Florida than ever before. In doing so, he ignored his administration's top experts on ocean science, who warned that the offshore plan dramatically understated the risks of an oil spill and petitioned Salazar to exempt the Arctic from drill-

FROM THE START OF ITS OPERATION in the Gulf, BP had found itself struggling against powerful "kicks" from gas buildup, just as MMS had warned. Now, on April 20th, the pent-up methane exploded in a fireball that incinerated 11 workers. Like a scene out of a real-life Jerry Bruckheimer film, the half-billion-dollar rig – 32,000 tons and 30 stories tall – listed over and sank to the bottom two days later, taking a mile of pipe down with it.

Within hours, the government assembled a response team at the "war room" of the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration in Seattle. The scene, captured by a NOAA cameraman and briefly posted on the agency's website, provides remarkable insight into the government's engagement during the earliest hours of the catastrophe, and, more troubling, the role of top administration figures in downplaying its horrific scope.

At a conference table, nearly a dozen scientists gather around a map of the Gulf. Joshua Slater, a commissioned NOAA of-

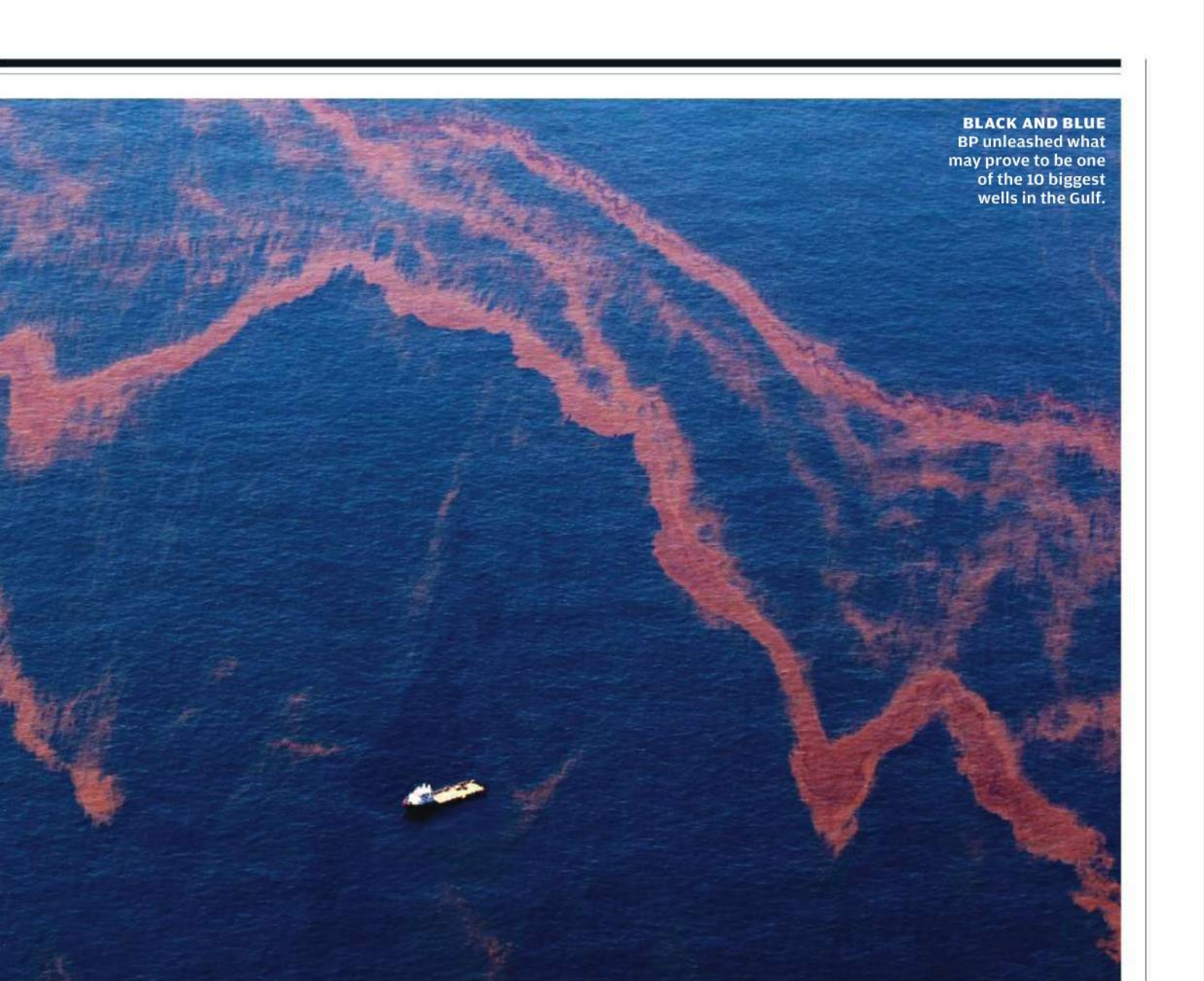
ficer dressed in his uniform, runs the show. "So far we've created a trajectory [of the slick] that was passed up the chain of command to the Coast Guard and eventually to the president showing where the oil might go," he tells the assembled team. BP's remote operated sub, he adds, "was unsuccessful in activating the blowout preventers, so we're gearing up right now."

An NOAA expert on oil disasters jumps in: "I think we need to be prepared for it to be the spill of the decade."

Written on a whiteboard at the front of the room is the government's initial, worst-case estimate of the size of the spill. While the figure is dramatically higher than any official estimate issued by BP or the government, it is in line with the high-end calculations by scientists who have monitored the spill.

"Estm: 64k - 110k bbls/Day." The equivalent of up to three *Exxon Valdez* spills gushing into the Gulf of Mexico every week.

Damningly, the whiteboard also documents the disconnect between what the government suspected to be the magni-



BLACK AND BLUE
BP unleashed what
may prove to be one
of the 10 biggest
wells in the Gulf.

tude of the disaster and the far lower estimates it was feeding to the public. Written below the federal estimate are the words, "300,000 gal/day reported on CNN." Appearing on the network that same day on a video feed from the Gulf, Coast Guard Rear Adm. Mary Landry insisted that the government had no figure. "We do not have an estimate of the amount of crude emanating from the wellhead," she said.

Later in the video, a voice on speakerphone with a heavy Southern accent reveals that government scientists were concerned from the very beginning about underwater plumes of oil – a reality that NOAA administrator Jane Lubchenco and BP executives are still seeking to downplay. "They weren't sure how that oil was going to react once it was spilled," the voice says. "Whether it was going to rise, or form layers and start twisting around." The government, in short, knew from the start that surface measurements of the oil slick – on which it would premise its absurdly low estimate of 5,000 barrels a day – were likely to be unreliable.

By that evening, the White House was gearing up for an urgent response. The president convened an emergency meeting in the Oval Office with Adm. Thad Allen, Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano, Interior Secretary Ken Salazar and top White House deputies Rahm Emanuel, Carol Browner and Larry Summers. Obama forcefully instructed his team that the response to the oil spill should be treated as a "number-one priority."

But then the fog of war set in. The following day, the Coast Guard – relying on assurances from BP – declared that the spill appeared to be limited to oil that was stored aboard the sunken rig. With a worst-case crisis seemingly averted, Obama checked out, heading off for a long weekend in Asheville, North Carolina, where he and the first lady would stop for ribs at a barbecue joint called 12 Bones Smokehouse before checking into the Grove Park Inn, a golf resort and spa. Asked whether the spill would hamper the president's offshore drilling agenda, spokesman Gibbs made light of the disaster. "I don't honest-

ly think it opens up a whole new series of questions," he said. "I doubt this is the first accident that has happened, and I doubt it will be the last."

The next day, April 24th, Landry told reporters that leaks had been discovered in the riser pipe and estimated the flow at 1,000 barrels a day. "This is a very serious spill," she said. Over the next five days, the administration took significant steps to deal with the spill, but the effort fell far short of what was needed to tackle a crisis that BP was already privately estimating could be as catastrophic as 14,000 barrels a day. A Joint Information Center – a strange partnership involving BP, the Coast Guard and MMS – was set up in Louisiana. Senior officials met with BP CEO Tony Hayward to "receive briefings on the company efforts to stop the flow." The Navy opened a base in Florida as a staging area for BP's cleanup work. Salazar ordered inspections for rigs throughout the Gulf and visited BP's command center in Houston. Napolitano began an investigation into the disaster.



MISSION ACCOMPLISHED
Obama and Ken Salazar unveil their plan to expand offshore drilling on March 31st – three weeks before the BP disaster.

The president himself was occupied elsewhere. After returning from his vacation, Obama spent Monday, April 26th palliating around with Derek Jeter and the New York Yankees, congratulating them on their World Series victory. He later took time to chat with the president of Honduras. When he put in a call to Gov. Haley Barbour of Mississippi, it was to talk about tornadoes that had caused damage in that state, with only a brief mention of the oil spill. On Tuesday the 27th, Obama visited a wind-turbine plant in Iowa. Wednesday the 28th, he toured a biofuels refinery in Missouri and talked up financial reform in Quincy, Illinois. He didn't mention the oil spill or the Gulf.

That evening, administration officials received news that – to judge from their subsequent response – scared the shit out of them. “The following is not public,” a confidential NOAA advisory stressed. “Two additional release points were found today in the tangled riser. If the riser pipe deteriorates further, the flow could become unchecked, resulting in a release volume an order of magnitude higher than previously thought. There is no official change in the volume released but the [Coast Guard] is no longer stating that the release rate is 1,000 barrels a day. Instead they are saying that they are preparing for a worst-case release and bringing all assets to bear.”

Standing before the cameras, a visibly shaken Landry bumbled through the reading of a press release. Although BP continued to believe its estimate of 1,000 barrels a day, she said, “NOAA experts believe the output could be as much as 5,000 barrels.” The remarks established, for the first time,

a figure that both BP and the government would stick to long past its sell-by date.

After he was briefed that evening, Obama told his deputies to contact the Pentagon. The following day, Napolitano declared the BP disaster, which was now approaching the size of Puerto Rico, an “Oil Spill of National Significance” – the designation required to draw on regional resources and to appoint an incident commander to coordinate a federal response. It had taken a full week after Deepwater Horizon exploded for the government to become fully engaged – a critical lapse that allowed the crisis to spiral out of control.

THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS office organized a show of overwhelming force, with Gibbs convening Browner, Napolitano, Deputy Interior Secretary David Hayes, EPA chief Lisa Jackson and Coast Guard Rear Adm. Sally Brice-O'Hara for a single press conference on April 29th. Though clearly meant to signal engagement, the all-star crew didn't have their message straight. When Brice-O'Hara praised “the professionalism of our partner, BP,” Napolitano quickly barked, “They are not our partner! They are not our partner!” For her part, Napolitano revealed that she didn't know whether the Defense Department possessed any assets that could help contain the spill, and referred vaguely to “whatever methodologies” BP was using to seal the well.

Instead of seizing the reins, the Obama administration cast itself in a supporting role, insisting that BP was responsible for cleaning up the mess. “When you say

the company is responsible and the government has oversight,” a reporter asked Gibbs on May 3rd, “does that mean that the government is ultimately in charge of the cleanup?” Gibbs was blunt: “No,” he insisted, “the responsible party is BP.” In fact, the National Oil and Hazardous Substances Pollution Contingency Plan – the federal regulations that lay out the command-and-control responsibilities for cleaning up an oil spill – makes clear that an oil company like BP cannot be left in charge of such a serious disaster. The plan plainly states that the government must “direct all federal, state or private actions” to clean up a spill “where a discharge or threat of discharge poses a substantial threat to the public health or welfare of the United States.”

“The government is in a situation where it's required to be in charge,” says William Funk, a professor of environmental and administrative law at Lewis and Clark College who previously worked as a staff attorney in the Justice Department.

What's more, the administration failed to ensure that BP was prepared to respond to the mess on the surface, where a lack of ships and equipment has left more than 100 miles of the coast – including vast stretches of fragile marshlands – covered in crude. According to MMS regulations, the agency is supposed to “inspect the stockpiles of industry's equipment for the containment and cleanup of oil spills.” In BP's case, the agency should have made sure the company was prepared to clean up a spill of 250,000 barrels a day. But when *ROLLING STONE* asked MMS whether BP had the required containment equipment on hand, the agency's head of public affairs

in the Gulf replied, "I am not clear if MMS has the info that you are requesting."

The effect of leaving BP in charge of capping the well, says a scientist involved in the government side of the effort, has been "like a drunk driver getting into a car wreck and then helping the police with the accident investigation." Indeed, the administration has seemed oddly untroubled about leaving the Gulf's fate in the hands of a repeat criminal offender, and uncaring about the crimes that may have been committed leading up to the initial sinking of the rig. The Obama Justice Department took more than 40 days after the initial blast killed 11 workers to announce it was opening a criminal probe.

From the start, the administration has seemed intent on allowing BP to operate in near-total secrecy. Much of what the public knows about the crisis it owes to Rep. Ed Markey, who chairs the House Subcommittee on Energy and the Environment. Under pressure from Markey, BP was forced to release footage of the gusher, admit that its early estimates put the leak as high as 14,000 barrels a day and post a live feed of its undersea operations on the

ing, they finally come out and issue an admission." Others are furious at the agency for criticizing the work of scientists studying the oil plumes rather than *leading* them. "Why they didn't have vessels there right then and start to gather the scientific data on oil and what the impacts are to different organisms is inexcusable," says a former government marine biologist. "They should have been right on top of that." Only six weeks into the disaster did the agency finally deploy its own research vessel to investigate the plumes.

THE FAILURE OF THE OBAMA administration to crack down on BP – and to tackle the crisis with the full force of the federal government – is likely to haunt the Gulf Coast for decades to come. Oil continues to lap up onshore in Louisiana, Alabama, Mississippi and Florida. Pelican rookeries are fouled, their eggs and nests soaked in oil. The region's fisheries – some of the richest in the world – are imperiled; anglers and shrimpers have been barred from more than a third of the Gulf's waters, which may never fully recover from

Tennessee, "that as terrible as the tragedy is, that unless we want \$14, \$16, \$18, \$20-a-gallon gasoline, that it's not realistic to think that we would actually stop drilling for oil in the Gulf?" Unbowed by the catastrophe that was still unfolding on his watch, Salazar heartily agreed, testifying that the president had directed him to "move forward" on offshore drilling.

That may help explain why the administration has gone to unusual lengths to contain the spill's political fallout. On May 14th, two days after the first video of the gusher was released, the government allowed BP to apply a toxic dispersant that is banned in England at the source of the leak – an unprecedented practice in the deep ocean. "The effort should be in *recovering* the oil, not making it more difficult to recover by dispersing it," says Sylvia Earle, a famed oceanographer and former NOAA chief scientist who helped the agency confront the world's worst-ever oil spill in the Persian Gulf after the first Iraq War. The chemical assault appeared geared, she says, "to improving the appearance of the problem rather than solving the problem."

OBAMA LEFT SO MANY PRO-INDUSTRY REGULATORS IN CHARGE OF DRILLING THAT INTERIOR STAFFERS CALL IT "THE THIRD BUSH TERM."

Internet – video that administration officials had possessed from the earliest days of the disaster. "We cannot trust BP," Markey said. "It's clear they have been hiding the actual consequences of this spill."

But rather than applying such skepticism to BP's math, the Obama administration has instead attacked scientists who released independent estimates of the spill. When one scientist funded by NOAA released a figure much higher than the government's estimate, he found himself being pressured to retract it by officials at the agency. "Are you sure you want to keep saying this?" they badgered him. Lubchenko, the head of NOAA, even denounced as "misleading" and "premature" reports that scientists aboard the research vessel *Pelican* had discovered a massive subsea oil plume. Speaking to PBS, she offered a bizarre denial of the obvious. "It's clear that there is something at depth," she said, "but we don't even know that it's oil yet."

Scientists were stunned that NOAA, an agency widely respected for its scientific integrity, appeared to have been co-opted by the White House spin machine. "NOAA has actively pushed back on every fact that has ever come out," says one ocean scientist who works with the agency. "They're denying until the facts are so overwhelm-

ing, they finally come out and issue an admission." Others are furious at the agency for criticizing the work of scientists studying the oil plumes rather than *leading* them. "Why they didn't have vessels there right then and start to gather the scientific data on oil and what the impacts are to different organisms is inexcusable," says a former government marine biologist. "They should have been right on top of that." Only six weeks into the disaster did the agency finally deploy its own research vessel to investigate the plumes.

Both the government and BP have reasons to downplay the extent of the spill. For BP, the motive is financial: Under the Clean Water Act, the company could owe fines of as much as \$4,300 for every barrel spilled, in addition to royalties for the oil it is squandering. For the Obama administration, the disaster threatens to derail the president's plan to expand offshore drilling. "It's crystal clear what the federal response to the tragedy ought to be," said Sen. Frank Lautenberg, who chairs the Senate subcommittee on environmental health. "Bring a dangerous offshore drilling pursuit to an end."

The administration, however, has made clear that it has no intention of reversing its plan to expand offshore drilling. Four weeks into the BP disaster, when Salazar was questioned in a Senate hearing about the future of the president's plan, he was happy to stand up for the industry's desire to drill at any cost. "Isn't it true," asked Sen. Lamar Alexander, a Republican from

Tennessee, "that as terrible as the tragedy is, that unless we want \$14, \$16, \$18, \$20-a-gallon gasoline, that it's not realistic to think that we would actually stop drilling for oil in the Gulf?" Unbowed by the catastrophe that was still unfolding on his watch, Salazar heartily agreed, testifying that the president had directed him to "move forward" on offshore drilling.

Critics of the administration's drilling plans fear that the president's decision to postpone drilling in the Arctic and appoint a commission to investigate the BP spill are merely stalling tactics, designed to blunt public anger about the disaster. "The way the PR is spinning is once that spill is plugged, then people declare victory," says Rep. Grijalva. "The commission stalls it long enough where the memory of the American people starts to fade a little bit on the issue. After that, we're back to where we were."

President Obama pushed to expand offshore drilling, in part, to win votes for climate legislation, which remains blocked in the Senate. The political calculus is understandable – the risk of an oil spill weighed against the far greater threat posed by global warming – but in the end, he may have succeeded only in compounding one environmental catastrophe with another. Even if the climate bill is eventually approved, the disaster in the Gulf will serve as a lasting and ugly reminder of the price we paid for our addiction to oil. "It was a bargain with the devil," says Steiner, the marine scientist who helped lead the response to the *Valdez* disaster. "And now the devil is gloating."

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THE DANCE TAKEOVER

From pop radio to indie rock, club beats rule the world in 2010

SUPERSTAR DJ

DAVID GUETTA

DON'T WORRY IF YOU'VE never heard of DJ David Guetta: "I am used to it!" he says cheerfully. The French house-music superstar has topped the charts in 12 countries and performed for 2 million people at Rio's Carnival, but he was nobody in America until the Black Eyed Peas' Guetta-produced "I Gotta Feeling" logged 14

weeks at Number One. Earlier this year, his fourth album, *One Love*, spawned another Top Five hit – the Akon-featuring "Sexy Bitch" – and his phone has been ringing nonstop with offers from the likes of T-Pain and Rihanna. As Euro-style dance music continues to conquer the charts (think Lady Gaga, Jason Derülo, Taio Cruz), Guetta and his glow-stick synths are leading the

charge. "For me, it's funny," he says en route to a flight to (where else?) Ibiza, where he hosts a party called Fuck Me I'm Famous. "I've been doing this for 20 years – but in America, I am the new hot guy!" And he's planning to stick around. "What I'm doing is something new," Guetta says. "Is it dance? Is it urban? It's difficult to say. But it's very exciting."

JOSH EELLS

FRESH BEATS

CLUBLAND'S LATEST SOUNDS

GENRE	THE SOUND	KEY ARTISTS	CHECK IT OUT AT...
LOW-END BEATS 	Instrumental underground hip-hop dosed with psych-rock trippiness: whomping sub-bass and shifty jazzlike meters	The best stuff comes from L.A., including scene king Flying Lotus (he opened for Thom Yorke), Daedelus, the Gaslamp Killer and Nosaj Thing.	Sneaker freaks and beat nerds space out and head-nod at Low End Theory, a Wednesday weekly at L.A.'s smoke-filled Airliner club.
DUBSTEP 	A catchall term for the latest post-jungle tunes out of the U.K. – giant-robot bass farts with dark, minor-key synths and techno-dub beats	New producers like Rusko and Joy Orbison have a light, R&B influenced feel; first-wavers Kode9 and Burial are dark and twisted.	Techno hippies and dreadlocked bassheads get their intestines shaken by the massive PA at Dub War, a party at New York club Love.
NEW CUMBIA 	Traditional Latin accordion music gets a techno makeover – like a Mexican wedding polka, but with enough bass to shake the church doors off.	A Pan-American crew: Mexico's Toy Selectah, Argentina's Zizek camp, and New York's Sabo and Cassady, whose "Esa Loca Cumbia" turns a 1940s cut into a global bass anthem.	Tight-jeaned gringos get low with Mission District cholos at San Francisco's monthly Tormenta Tropical night.
SPACE DISCO 	The dance-music version of Yacht Rock – all icy Giorgio Moroder-style synths, rubbery bass lines and supersmooth production at easygoing tempos	Überstylish Scandinavians rule the scene, including Prins Thomas, Studio and Lindström, whose epic "I Feel Space" is a seven-minute mission statement.	Book your SAS ticket for Oslo to groove with the beardo-disco crowd at club Blå's "Shari Vari" night.
U.K. FUNKY 	The gazillionth iteration of London house music: Soulful British divas mount electro-soca rhythms; think dubstep's blingier older brother.	U.K. DJs Geeneus, Cooly G, Roska, Brackles, Marcus Nasty, Deadboy and Crazy Cousinz, whose tune "Do You Mind" was covered by the xx	London's Night Slugs party is a casual, no-dress-code club night – or just download mixes from pirate radio station Rinse FM.

KEN TAYLOR



HOT CHIP COME ALIVE!

WE'LL TRY ANYTHING ONSTAGE," says Joe Goddard, co-founder of London's Hot Chip. "We want to keep it entertaining, like an old Prince show." At Hot Chip gigs, hundreds of blissed-out indie kids jump around to a mix of slinky house grooves, guitar-laden disco and hard-riffing techno – with pretty white-soul vocals and lyrics laced with sly humor. (2004's "Playboy" bragged about "Drivin' in my Peugeot...blazin' out Yo La Tengo.") "We have ties to indie culture – I still love Pavement," Goddard says. "But people come to our shows looking to drink and dance. So we've gotten more into playing house- and techno-based songs at shows." With that in mind, Hot Chip typically amp up their already danceable songs for the stage – using a five-piece band and a massive array of synths, sequencers, effects pedals and other future-tech gear. At recent shows, the breezy, calypso-y "One Life Stand," the title track of Hot Chip's most recent album, has become a monster house jam you feel in your chest. Says frontman Alexis Taylor, "We've been almost perverse about not re-creating our record's sound." **CHRISTIAN HOARD**

WILL.I.AM: MY FAVORITE DJs

When I say DJ, you're thinking [scratching noises]. But what I mean is a whole new DJ. They have laptops, do remixes on the fly and rock crowds. It's the ultimate freestyle improv. DJs like David Guetta and Tiësto have found a way to make money without selling a whole bunch of records. The biggest DJs make a million to \$6 million a year. How many artists make \$6 million a year?



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THE NEW PARTY-STARTERS



RUSKO

The buzziest export from London's dub-step scene, Rusko has a simple goal: "I want to change the sound of American radio." And he might do it – inspired by his Jock Jams-worthy synth riffs and sub-sonic bass lines, M.I.A., T.I. and Britney Spears have all hired the 25-year-old to make them beats. The L.A. transplant (he was born in Leeds) chalks this up to both his music's mile-wide hedonistic streak, which inspires crowd-surfing at his shows, and his facility with different styles: He's planning "to make some cheesy, sheen-y pop" for Spears; M.I.A.'s new album is "stripped down and way out – we were trying to scare people."

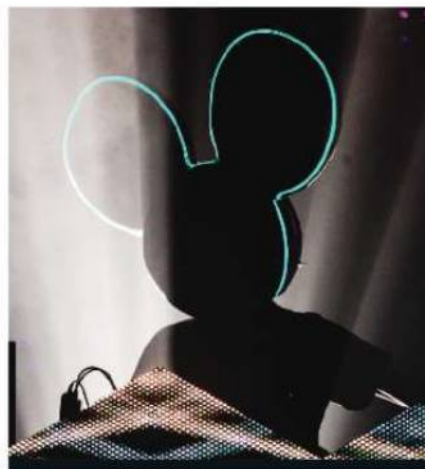
JONAH WEINER



UFFIE

American-born, Paris-based MC Uffie has the girlie voice of Shirley Temple and the not-so-girlie mouth of Eazy-E. At age 18, she was already rapping about being "ready to fuck" and sharing a bill with 2 Live Crew in Miami. Four years later, her debut, *Sex Dreams and Denim Jeans*, is packed with guns ("Pop the Glock"), tricked-out cars ("ADD SUV") and hip French producers: Madonna's collaborator Mirwais and members of the French Ed Banger collective. "My songs are definitely feminist," Uffie says. "I'm just showing that girls and guys want the same things. Guys have been naughty forever. It's my turn now."

MELISSA MAERZ



DEADMAU5

Maybe it's just the natural humility of a guy who wears a giant mouse helmet live, but Deadmau5 (pronounced "dead mouse") isn't big on self-aggrandizement: "There are so many talented people who could do what I'm doing." Born Joel Zimmerman, Deadmau5, 29, began his career as a lark. He and a pal made a spoof song "about how easy it is to make a house track" – and then the song ("This Is the Hook") became a hit. Today he plays unpretentiously epic jams for crowds of thousands. Citing Kiss as an influence, he says his elaborate light-up stage rig (and mouse helmet) are "a gimmick – I wish it was all about the music, but everybody needs a brand."

J.W.

AMERICA'S BIGGEST DANCE PARTIES

ELECTRIC DAISY CARNIVAL

LOS ANGELES JUNE 25TH-26TH

HEADLINERS **DEADMAU5, MOBY, WILL.I.A.M, KASKADE**

At the 14th annual Electric Daisy, clothes will definitely be coming off. "Last year, kids were freaking out and undressing in the field," says San Francisco superstar trance DJ Kaskade, who returns to headline the raucous fest – which expects to draw 100,000 fans a day with circus flourishes (fire twirlers, acrobats, stilt walkers), free carnival rides (merry-go-rounds, bumper cars) and 80 top DJs and electronic artists. The trippy vibe is enhanced by elaborate production – expect lots of lasers and pyro. "It's loud, chaotic and freaky," says Kaskade. "It's the best show I'll play all year."

NICOLE FREHSE

ELECTRIC ZOO FESTIVAL

NEW YORK SEPTEMBER 4TH-5TH

HEADLINERS **CHEMICAL BROTHERS, PAUL VAN DYK**

Dozens of top DJs take Randall's Island, off Manhattan, for one of the biggest electronic fests on the East Coast.

HARD FEST

LOS ANGELES JULY 17TH NEW YORK JULY 24TH

HEADLINERS **M.I.A., DIE ANTWOORD, SLEIGH BELLS**

The M.I.A.-curated bicoastal festival features an aggressively hip lineup of mostly electronic artists.



L.A.'s massive Electric Daisy

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: DAN WILTON; YSA PEREZ; DREW RESSLER/RUKES.COM; MICHAEL TULLBERG/GETTY IMAGES

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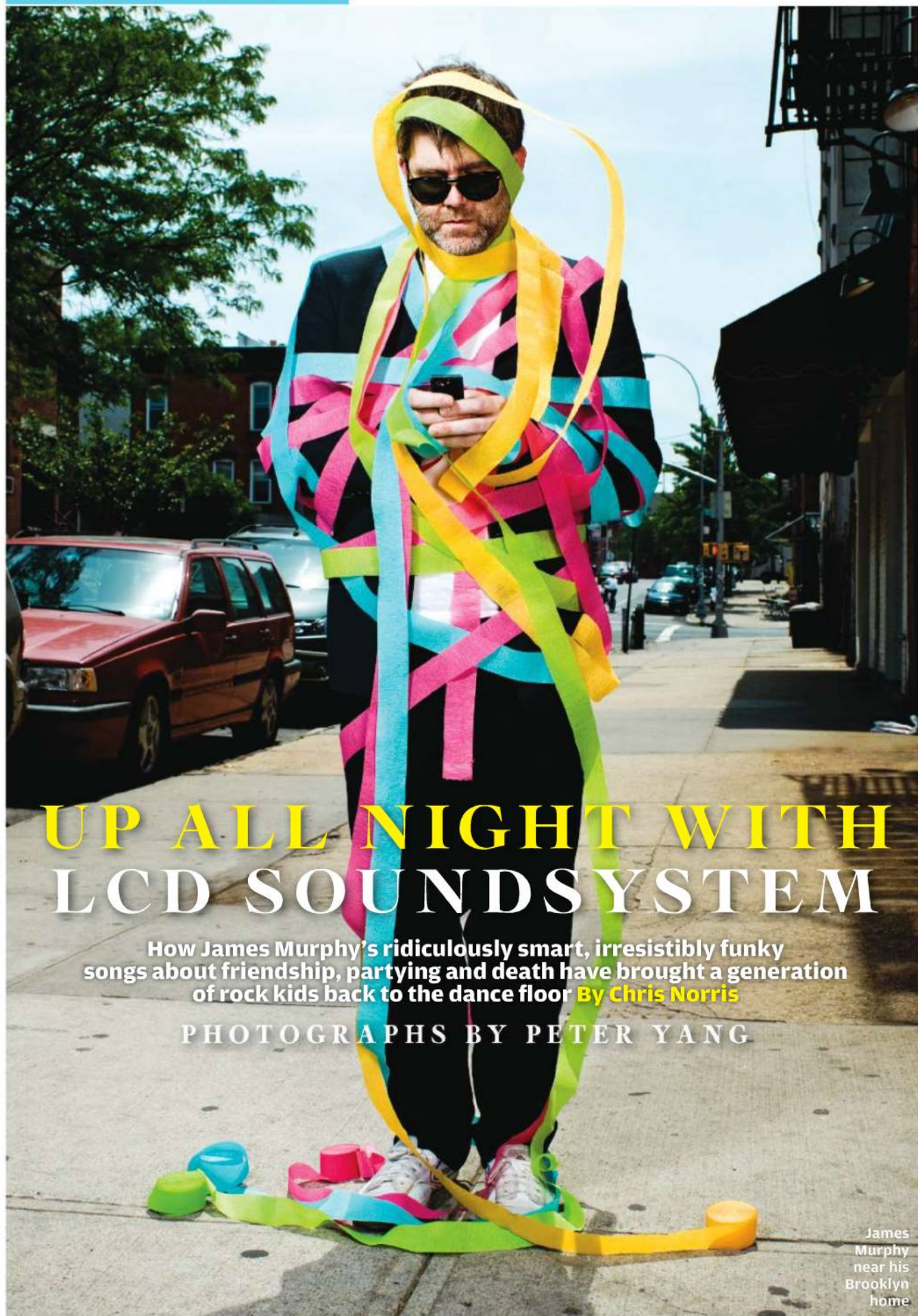


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UP ALL NIGHT WITH LCD SOUNDSYSTEM

How James Murphy's ridiculously smart, irresistibly funky songs about friendship, partying and death have brought a generation of rock kids back to the dance floor **By Chris Norris**

PHOTOGRAPHS BY PETER YANG

James
Murphy
near his
Brooklyn
home

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THE DANCE TAKEOVER

7:30 p.m., backstage at Terminal 5.

James Murphy is hunched forward on a black leather sofa, focusing, as usual, on logistics. His full head of graying, punk-coiffed hair is tilted down, his eyebrows form a mournful pyramid, and his blue eyes scan texts on a tiny Ericsson cellphone as he attempts the impossible: guest-listing his friends without exceeding the venue's limit. "I don't like to promise something and then fail," says Murphy, a tall, bloke-ish 40 whose doughy, stubbled face somehow looks older and younger than he is. In an hour and a half, his band, LCD Soundsystem, will play the first of four sold-out nights in New York, where Murphy, to say the least, has many friends.

LCD keyboardist Nancy Whang stands next to him, applying makeup in the mirror of this second-floor dressing room in Manhattan's multitiered Terminal 5. A disco ball hangs from the ceiling, bottles of whiskey and vodka stand ready on a shelf, and a posted memo bears today's wireless-access password: "davidbowie." Murphy is suited for game time: black early-Eighties YSL blazer ("10 bucks on eBay," he says), black YSL trousers ("free" for doing live runway music for the line's show in Paris), white YSL tee (XXL) and Chinese-made Feiyue kung-fu sneakers ("10 bucks in Chinatown"). This stylishly DIY activewear updates last tour's white linen suits, of which Murphy bought five sets in Spain for \$60 apiece, then wore through a grueling circuit of summer festivals. By the end, they were filthy. "I was horrifying when I got on the plane," Murphy says, recalling the common two-part reaction: "First, [*brightly*] 'Oh, dude in a white suit!' Then, 'Whoa... *homeless* dude in a white suit!'"

LCD posse members begin trickling in. "Aaayy, Babaganoush!" calls Murphy as he engulfs pal Justin Chearno in a bear-hug. "Now it's a party!" The 40-ish Chearno, a guitarist who played on LCD's *Sound of Silver*, helps run Brooklyn's Uva Wines and was among the crew at Murphy's apartment last night for the usual: listening to old disco records and sampling varieties – this time a Massa Vecchia Vermen-tino and a Chilean organic that "showed well," says Murphy, but was "like a triple-A team coming up against the Yankees."

Murphy hears some aggro techno pounding over the club's PA and sends an assistant to change the pre-show music. "Something more upbeat," he says. "More sauvignon blanc, not so chardonnay." Murphy is sipping a red plastic cup of Veuve Clicquot but says he doesn't drink much before concerts. Comparatively, at least. A few weeks ago, LCD played their first concert in two years, and Murphy "can't remember any of it." He attributes this to an ill-advised return to a beverage from a decade ago, when he first began performing live: a whiskey-champagne



Murphy with his key collaborators, Whang and Mahoney

cocktail invented in Dublin and known as "an Irish cunt."

Art, for Murphy, isn't always pretty. "I don't have a direct line to my own well of craziness," he says. "My father was born in 1931, and I'm the last son of an older man from a totally different era. So that feely, Seventies, get-your-creativity-on shit makes me insane. I was a very good engineer – I could take your guitar, take it apart and put it back together like a rifle in the rain and then play it. And that's where I get my self-worth. But that other little voice that says, [*peeping*] 'Try this' – that's very, very quiet. Most are like, [*loudly*] 'This is embarrassing, don't do this!'"

Lately, this affliction has required ever-more-radical strategies: flying equipment and friends out to an L.A. mansion last year, installing a high-end recording studio himself, instituting an all-white dress code and recording LCD's new *This Is Happening!* surrounded by buddies, DJs, artists and chefs, while playing most of the instruments himself. "He was in his own world in L.A.," says Pat Mahoney, LCD's drummer and Murphy's chief collaborator. "Which he needed to create for himself."

8:30 p.m., just before showtime. The dressing-room lights are dimmed, and the disco ball spins slowly. Mahoney falls into a chair, his chest heaving after the stress of a circuitous subway ride from Brooklyn. "I got all the way into Manhattan before I realized I forgot my show clothes and had to go back," he says. Asked where the

clothes are now, he says, "Right there," and points to a pair of swim trunks. Mahoney sits for a minute with eyes closed, soaking up the room's ambience. "It's amazing," someone says. "It's so quiet."

"Yeah, well, big guy left the room," says Whang.

11:15 p.m., backstage, moments after the show. LCD's extended family is staging a 2010 update of the zany, overcrowded party scene in *Breakfast at Tiffany's*. Latino skaters, Welsh ravers, chubby bearded hipsters, could-be American Apparel models, Katy Perry, Murphy's teenage niece and every other form of human overflows from the dressing rooms and into the hall, as Murphy balances a red plastic cup, pulled this way and that by the scrum. Soon he's in a loud tête-à-tête with a black, mohawked guy named Ahmad, whom Murphy first spotted years ago in a D.C. club crowd. "He was way heavy then, and he goes up front, and he's just dancing crazy, and we were like, 'Holy shit, this dude rules,'" says Murphy. "We brought him backstage, fell in love, and he's been with us ever since."

11:30 p.m., backstage. Murphy paces down a quiet corridor. He isn't feeling so great, he says – had a bad monitor mix, couldn't hear himself, sang himself hoarse, may be getting sick. A friend tries to cajole him to the West Village afterparty. "There's no way," Murphy says. "I really need to get my voice back."

11:45 p.m., yellow cab. “West Street and Jane,” Murphy says as he and Mahoney fall into the taxi and head downtown. Within 10 blocks, the Romanian driver has a question for Murphy: “Can you explain, please, the meaning of the phrase ‘Holy shit?’”

Yelling from the windy back seat, Murphy begins a largely improvised etymology that ends, “But all our curses are stolen from other languages, so it really doesn’t mean anything.” He asks for the Romanian version: “Like, what would you say if you dropped something on your foot?”

“Satan eat shit!”

“‘Satan eat shit’ doesn’t make any sense, dude!” yells Murphy. “When we’re surprised, we’ll say, ‘Holy shit,’ but when you drop something on your foot, you gotta say, ‘Fuck!’ ‘Cause it’s the perfect expression ‘cause it starts with a *fuaaaah*.”

“Hi,” calls a female voice, jerking all heads rightward. A lithe, young-Virginia-Madsen-looking blonde is in the open window of a passing taxi. “Where’re you guys going?” she says, having recognized Murphy from the show.

Murphy thinks as the other cab drifts ahead. “Jane!” he says at last. “Jane Hotel!”

“Jane Hotel?” says the girl. “Fuck, yeah!”

“Fuck, yeah,” Murphy repeats as the other cab pulls ahead, as if he’s parsing this American idiom. At 21, Murphy, then a Pynchon-obsessed fiction writer, was approached to write for a new sitcom called *Seinfeld*. “I smoked pot instead,” he says. Ten years later, Murphy’s first LCD song was an extended comedic monologue called “Losing My Edge” – a paranoid rant by a preposterously well-credentialed hipster who was at every seminal musical event from Captain Beefheart’s first rehearsal to the opening of legendary New York gay disco the Paradise Garage.

“He’s not short on words,” says Mahoney. “One of the reasons that we work well together is I know what he means by ‘wonky,’ ‘ascot’ or ‘tough.’”

“Ascot,” per Mahoney, is “a sustain-y lord-of-the-manoor sound” like that associated with late-Seventies Robert Fripp. “Wonky” signifies a simple, powerful kind of rhythm played beneath a drummer’s technical abilities.

“Tough?”

“That’s the gayest disco sound in the world,” says Mahoney. “A sound that’s so gay and over-the-top, it’s tough. Like [Hot Chip’s] ‘Over and Over’ – it’s sung in falsetto and it’s tough as nails. Or Soft Cell, anything off of *Non-Stop Erotic Cabaret*.”

“Then there’s ‘good-bad-good,’” adds Murphy. “That’s an important one. It’s a complex way of liking something that’s really wrong. For us, being hyper-self-conscious, media-savvy fuckwads, we have to go with the first instinct even if we

have all sorts of voices saying, ‘Uh, *noooo*.’ That’s when you go to ‘good-bad-good.’ For instance, the falsetto bit on ‘I Can Change’ was wrong-y wrong. And it took Pat being like, ‘No, leave it in.’”

“I had the hair standing up on the back of my neck,” says Mahoney, “so I said, ‘That’s probably good.’”

12:30 a.m., Jane Hotel. After lopping up the stairs to the private bar area, Murphy kicks in with a bottle of high-end champagne called Ruinart. “Ruin art!” Murphy says, pleased. “Like, ‘Fuck art, let’s dance!’”

Which was more or less Murphy’s motto 12 years ago. He had been a sound engineer, working mostly on indie-rock albums, but then he had a revelation: making obscure guitar-band records was no way to go through life. “It felt like indie rock had become the Ford Taurus of music,” he says. “Where everyone was like, ‘We’re not going to stick our necks out, we’re

“You can be a casualty of your own hipness,” Murphy says. “Or you can choose to be this beautiful thing.”

going to be solid and real and have a shitty band.” Yeah Yeah Yeahs singer Karen O, standing three feet away, nods and laughs. “I remember what you used to yell,” she says. “Who wants to fuck this band?” “Nobody! Nobody! Nobody wants to fuck this band!”

In 2001, after some late-night epiphanies involving Ecstasy, Murphy co-founded the New York disco-punk label DFA, releasing discs by the Rapture, Hot Chip and other leaders of the movement. But Murphy himself didn’t become an artist until after 30, like music’s version of the critic-turned-director Jean-Luc Godard. Unlike Godard, Murphy made the jump the same year both of his parents died and an event befell his city that made his label’s original name, Death From Above, untenable. “When [9/11] happened, it was right after my dad had just died,” he says. “And I remember thinking” – he shrugs and raises his palms – “Of course.”

Among the happier events of the period was Murphy’s first Yeah Yeah Yeahs show. “It was maybe five songs,” he says. “And I was like, ‘Dude, this rules!’” After a few more exuberant compliments, he looks at

Karen O more seriously. “But the first time I heard you play . . . the sadder songs? That was a real turning point for me,” Murphy says. “It was like. . .” He searches for the right word and then says, almost with surprise, “Beautiful! And it was a time when the audience was not looking for beautiful. The audience was looking for the next big thing. It was, like, you can choose to be a casualty of your own hipness, or you can choose to be this beautiful thing.”

1:30 a.m., VIP room. One of Murphy’s inner circle stands at the bar. “The new [LCD] record is about recovering from a terrible year,” says Jayson Green, singer of the Brooklyn band Panthers, mentioning lyrics like those in “Home” that long to “shut the door on terrible times.” Last year, Murphy’s friend, drummer Jerry Fuchs, fell to his death in an elevator shaft while Murphy was recording *This Is Happening!*, which is dedicated to him. “But now, even earlier lines like ‘Where are your friends tonight,’” says Green, quoting LCD’s “All My Friends.” “I mean, Jerry was alive when that song was written, but when James soundchecked with it at Webster Hall, he had to walk offstage.”

2 a.m., VIP room. The blonde from tonight’s passing cab has arrived and buttonholed Murphy, fingering the strap on his shoulder bag. For his entire career, Murphy has written deeply ambivalent songs about love, life, friendship, music and the nature of New York hipsterdom, the last inspiring his transcendent lament, “New York, I Love You (But You’re Bringing Me Down).” A month ago, Murphy performed for 70,000 people in a Coachella slot right before Jay-Z, who came up afterward to give him props in a conversation Murphy can’t quite remember. But tonight, as the band finished this New York non-anthem, Murphy’s trademark ambivalence – part of what helped this “hyper-self-conscious, media-savvy fuckwad’s” albums render New York life better than any single novel of the decade – crossfaded into something else. A piano nocturne introduced the chorus of Jay-Z’s “Empire State of Mind,” which Murphy and Co. sang as lights flashed, confetti exploded, and thousands of completely unironic white balloons tumbled onto the crowd.

Now Murphy has extricated himself from the blonde’s heart-to-heart and is back in his circle of friends. Mahoney and Whang dance in a peaceful circle to the Talking Heads’ “This Must Be the Place (Naïve Melody):” “Home/Is where I want to be/But I guess I’m already there.” Murphy, surrounded by his posse in a banquet, is beaming. “New York *is* better than France and London. It is, isn’t it?” he says, looking from friend to friend, as if it’s dawning on him at last. “It *is* better.”



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Petty and crew make a studio album with the mojo of their live show

Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers

★★★★★

Mojo Reprise

BY DAVID FRICKE



Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers have been one of America's greatest live

bands since their first club tours and opening-act jobs, in 1976 and '77. Lethal garage-rock modernists with pop-hook savvy, they've always had the chops and empathy to make a studio record like *Mojo*: everybody in one room, going for the master take together and getting it fast. They just took 34 years to work up the nerve.

It was worth the wait. *Mojo* is dynamite – Petty and the Heartbreakers' matured return to the elementary fury of their first golden-twang era, capped by 1981's *Hard Promises*. The performances are natural knockouts – cocksure grooves, pithy knife-play guitars and little overdub fuss – worked up, then nailed, some on the first full take, at the band's suburban Los Angeles rehearsal space. Petty can't help stressing the authenticity here. The credits include the make and vintage of every instrument and the exact tracking date of each song. That's Petty playing a 1964 Gibson ES-335 guitar and lead guitarist Mike Campbell wielding his steady weapon, a '59 Les Paul Sunburst, on April 28th of last year, in the opening number, "Jefferson Jericho Blues."

That's almost too much detail, a distraction from what actually makes the song work: drummer Steve Ferrone and bassist Ron Blair's blues-train shuffle; Campbell's snarling breaks; the way Scott Thurston's harp dogs the guitars, Little Walter-style, the whole way. "I'm writing it for the band to play," Petty told us last fall, referring to the songs he was bringing to the sessions.

That's just how they sound, like well-oiled treble-armored vehicles built for bruising, driven with all hands on the wheel: "Takin' My Time," with its grinding-fuzz bridge; the heavy Yardbirds-style rave-up "I Should Have Known It"; the closer, "Good Enough," a compound storm of slow-blues Led Zeppelin and the Beatles' "I Want You (She's So Heavy)." "Love hit us hard/Like an overdue train," Petty drawls in the oceanic waltz "First Flash of Freedom," a setup for the real psychedelic wham of the exultant Jerry Garcia-joins-the-Allman Brothers guitars and the meaty, rippled sweep of Benmont Tench's organ break.

Petty surely didn't plan it that way, but *Mojo* arrives with instructive synchronicity, on the heels of the Rolling Stones' reissued *Exile on Main Street*. The records have a lot in common: the double-LP length and garage-comrade swing; the constant motion in the lyrics, out of trouble and blown chances toward something that, in the distance, looks like refuge. "I see with the eyes of somethin' wounded/Somethin' still standing after the storm," Petty sings over the dark gallop and skidding guitars in "Running Man's Bible."

But also like *Exile*, *Mojo* comes with a creeping grip in its rumble, sly, intuitive details that snag you at every pass, like Tench's raindrop accents on electric piano in the road-trip reverie "The Trip to Pirate's Cove" or the extra beat of smoldering silence before the chorus line in "Lover's Touch." You don't get that kind of cool with Pro Tools and Auto-Tune. It takes a great band, playing as one for the toughest audience in the world: itself.

Key Tracks: "First Flash of Freedom," "Running Man's Bible"

Drake's Soft Bulletin

Downtempo, vulnerable, unknowable: Rap's rookie of the decade officially debuts

Drake ★★★★★½

Thank Me Later Cash Money/Universal



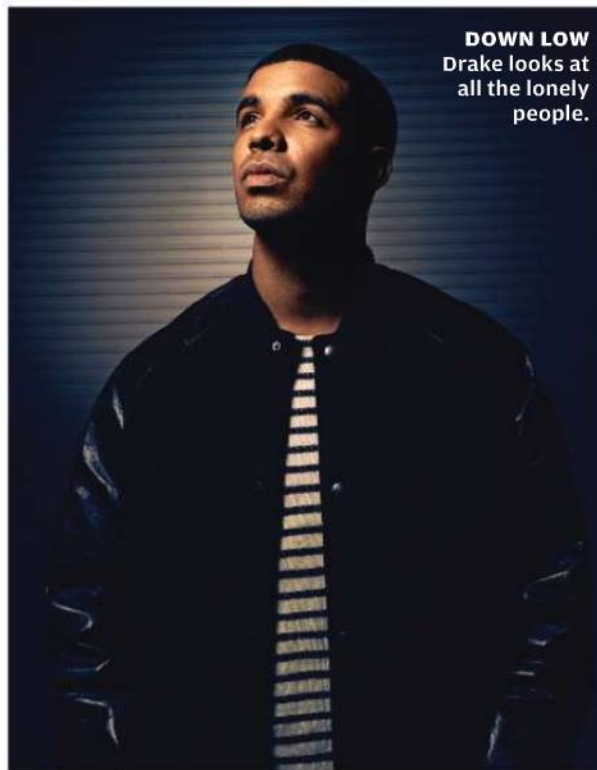
It's a shock to hear how softly – sluggishly, even – Drake announces himself on his official debut. The tempos are slow, the beats are awash in gauzy atmospherics, and Drake raps (and, surprisingly often, sings) in the voice of a guy who's half-awake. "This is really one of my dumbest flows ever/I haven't slept in days," he says in "Unforgettable."

Drake is in total command of a style that would have been hard to imagine dominating hip-hop a few years ago: He's subtle and rueful rather than loud and lively; emotionally transparent rather than thuggy. He isn't the most naturally charismatic MC, but he is one of the wittiest, packing his songs with clever images ("I'm 23/With a money tree") and punch lines that land with a snap ("I live for the nights that I can't remember/With the people I won't forget"), even next to guests like Jay-Z, Young Jeezy, T.I. and Lil Wayne.

Thank Me Later's downtempo beats, many by Canadian producer 40, call to mind Kanye West's *808s & Heartbreak* and Kid Cudi's *Man on the Moon*. It's easy to read it as a sign of the times: Is this boom in bum-rap a reaction to the recession, or the sound of hip-hop shuffling into middle age? But more than anything, the sultry production gives *Later* a coherent vibe – it's an album meant to be listened to from start to finish. And judging by the anticipation around its release, it will be, many times over.

JODY ROSEN

DOWN LOW
Drake looks at all the lonely people.



Miley Cyrus

★★★★

Can't Be Tamed Hollywood

Hannah Montana rails against her Disney overlords (sort of)



Four years into her career, Miley Cyrus is, like other bubblegum idols before her, getting cranky about her image. In "Robot," the booming dance-pop opus near the end of her third album, Cyrus cries, "I'm not your robot/Stop telling me I'm part of the big machine." But Cyrus is indeed part of a big machine – and is better for it. *Tamed* was mostly cooked up by the pros who helped make Cyrus a Disney princess. It's a Top 40 record of a high order, packed with electro-pop hooks and big Kelly Clarkson-style shout-along choruses. Cyrus' 17-year-old ire – however genuine it is – just adds spice.

J.R.

Key Tracks: "Liberty Walk," "Can't Be Tamed"

Uffie

★★★★½

Sex Dreams and Denim

Jeans Ed Banger/Because/Elektra

Ke\$ha meets her Paris match



"Badass bitch/I'm rated X/I'm gifted, ain't gonna sell sex," rhymes Uffie, 22, over shimmery French techno with a dash of Audio Two – all true, except the sex-selling bit. A Florida-hottie-turned-globetrotting-MC, Anna-Catherine Hartley began spitting horny verses with Paris' Ed Banger crew (see *Justice*). On her debut LP, her slackness begins to shine. On "ADD SUV," Pharrell plays Sonny to her pill-damaged Cher; the title track takes Lou Reed's "Rock & Roll" for a girl-group joy ride. Did Ke\$ha bite her steez? Who cares? There's always room for another party girl.

WILL HERMES

Key Tracks: "ADD SUV," "Sex Dreams and Denim Jeans"



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TOP SINGLES

The Roots feat. Jim James

★★★★

"Dear God 2.0"

All major services

This moody jam remakes the Monsters of Folk gospel-soul joint, adding fat ?uestlove beats and Black Thought's missive to God: "They said, 'He's busy, hold the line, please.'" Maybe try Twitter?

WILL HERMES

Perfume

Genius ★★★★★½

"Mr. Peterson"

All major services

On this ballad, Seattle newcomer Mike Hadreas conjures Morrissey as a haunted teen. "He made me a tape of Joy Division," Hadreas mewls, sketching a suicidal pedophile. Gus Van Sant: Your music supervisor needs to check this kid out.

W.H.

Gayngs ★★★★★½

"The Gaudy Side of Town"

myspace.com/gayngs

No joke: Bon Iver's Justin Vernon sheds his folkie beard to croon this atmospheric slow-jam with Midwestern indie band Gayngs. They drip so much coital energy Prince nearly got onstage with them. But, no, he said - they don't need me. He was right.

ERIC MAGNUSON

Ne-Yo ★★★★★

"Beautiful Monster"

myspace.com/neyo

There's a problem with Ne-Yo's girlfriend. "You're a knife, sharp and deadly," he sings. In lieu of couples therapy, superproducers Stargate lend a jittery Euro-house beat. It's more goofy than scary, but Ne-Yo's so amiable you root for him - to find a nicer gal, at least.

JODY ROSEN



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Hear these songs, plus more hot new tracks, at rollingstone.com.



William and Win Butler

Arcade Fire Return in Grand Style

Arcade Fire ★★★★★ "The Suburbs" / "Month of May"

"2009, 2010/Wanna make a record how I felt then," sings Win Butler on "Month of May." As usual, the Arcade Fire frontman is feeling a lot. Childhood nostalgia, suburban ennui, parenthood, war, death - these are just some of the themes crammed into the songs on Arcade Fire's fabulous new double-sided 12-inch single. "The Suburbs" is a piano-fueled shuffle that starts dreamy and then turns vaguely paranoid as it looks back at a teenage wasteland with longing and amusement: "You

always seemed so sure/That one day we'd be fighting/In a suburban war.../ But by the time the first bombs fell/ We were already bored." "Month of May" is a furious punk boogie about disaffected kids that suggests a Crazy Horse-backed Neil Young shaking a fist at America's listless youth. Both songs reveal a band looking more and more like Springsteen's and U2's rightful heirs, with an undiminished appetite for grandeur - big themes, big emotions and an even more potent sound.

J.R.

Kanye's Schizo Comeback

Kanye West feat.

Dwele ★★★★★

"Power" kanyewest.com

After you've sampled Can and compared yourself to Maya Angelou, how do you reach new heights of left-field craziness? How about rapping over King Crimson's paranoid prog jam "21st Century Schizoid Man"? Kanye's best single since "Stronger" rides a torrid whipsaw beat, as he takes on his spelunking media image, pinballing from self-aware ("I'm an asshole") to defiant ("Kiss my asshole"). The sentiment is classic Kanye, but he hasn't melted down this brilliantly in a long time.

JON DOLAN

M.I.A. Fans Bad Press

M.I.A. ★★★★★½

"I'm a Singer" YouTube

Because tweeting the cell number of Lynn Hirschberg, the reporter responsible for an unflattering *New York Times Magazine* profile on her, wasn't enough revenge, M.I.A. released this dis track. Over murky electro, she calls out writers and Hirschberg in particular: "Journalists be thick as shit.... You're a racist, I wouldn't trust you one bit." "Singer" is bland as music, and though M.I.A. has a right to be miffed, it's less interesting than the raw audio about those truffle-flavored french fries.

CHRISTIAN HOARD

BOOTLEG

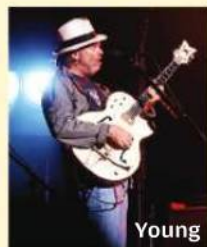
Neil Young

Ryman Auditorium

Nashville

June 1st, 2010

After playing six delicate acoustic songs for this solo concert at the intimate Ryman Auditorium, Neil Young switched to an electric Les Paul and began thrashing out "Down by the River" - still unaccompanied, like a one-man Crazy Horse. Young has always glided between the extremes of quiet and loud, but rarely have both sides come out at once. Young is road-testing tunes that might appear on his upcoming Daniel Lanois-produced album. Of the seven tracks offered, the strongest is "You Never Call" - a tribute to his longtime creative partner, Larry Johnson, who died in January. "You're in heaven, where there's noth-



Young

ing to do," Young sings in a sorrowful voice. "The ultimate vacation, with no back pain." Another new one - "Peaceful Valley" - laments the destruction of the environment, tracing it back to the days of the pioneers. He closes with powerful electric renditions of "Cinnamon Girl" and "Cortez the Killer." You miss the other guys in Crazy Horse, but if all goes to plan, these new songs could form the basis of Young's best album in a long while.

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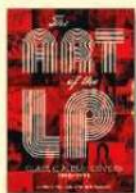
Martin Kelly, Terry Foster, Paul Kelly

Casell Illustrated

The big bang that was rock & roll in the mid-1950s probably wouldn't have happened had Leo Fender not spent the 1940s fine-tuning the electric guitar. This new, exhaustively researched photo history

traces the instrument from its days as a dinky wooden instrument through the breakthroughs of the Stratocaster. Wonkish fun for guitarists, with nearly 300 pages of photos.

ANDY GREENE

**The Art of the LP: Classic Album Covers 1955-1995** ★★★

Johnny Morgan and Ben Wardle Sterling

Divided into sections like "Sex," "Drugs" and "Ego," this coffee-table tome puts some of the most famous images from the vinyl-album era into thematic rather than historical context (the Stones' classic *Sticky Fingers* is juxtaposed with Mötley

Crüe's 1981 LP *Too Fast for Love* – a similarly salacious crotch shot). The rest of the book covers everybody from Ornette Coleman to N.W.A., making this a surefire conversation starter.

MARK KEMP

**The Fine Wisdom and Perfect Teachings of the Kings of Rock and Roll** ★★★½

Mark Edmundson Harper

Not your typical rock tell-all: Edmundson is a former stagehand on Seventies tours with Pink Floyd, the Grateful Dead and the Allman Brothers who

became a University of Virginia English professor and has written about Freud and Derrida. The result is an entertaining coming-of-age story that cloaks a social critique of the post-Sixties USA.

M.K.

Laurie Anderson

★★★★½

Homeland *Nonesuch*

A true art-rock takes on 21st-century America



For her first studio album in nine years, performance art's greatest star combines personal acoustic songs with the synth-powered social commentary of her 1980s heyday. Laurie Anderson summons chamber music on "Thinking of You" and echoes classic Motown on the lyrics to "Strange Perfumes." The meat of the album, however, is explicitly political, and its showstopper is "Only an Expert," which melds global warming, bank bailouts, Oprah Winfrey and roaring guitar feedback from Anderson's hubby, Lou Reed. Hilarious and horrifying, it's the harsh 21st-century flip side to her unnervingly gentle hit "O Superman."

BARRY WALTERS

Key Tracks: "Only an Expert," "Another Day in America"

Hanson ★★★Shout It Out *3CG*

Teen idols complete transition to freewheeling R&B band



Lots of teen idols routinely make proclamations of independence (see Miley Cyrus, page 76) but few actually follow through. Isaac, Taylor and Zac Hanson's fifth album since their 1997 breakthrough is entirely self-written and self-produced, and aside from some bass lines and horn riffs, it's all self-played. Having flexed their rock muscles on 2007's *The Walk*, the Hansons pump up the soul in their pop, stretching beyond the Jackson 5-isms of "MMMBop" to embrace Sixties Southern R&B. Most white guys who aim for Ray Charles end up like the Blues Brothers, but on effusive tracks like "Thinking 'Bout Somethin'," Tulsa's favorite siblings simply sound liberated.

B.W.

Key Tracks: "Thinking 'Bout Somethin'," "Make It Out Alive"

Various Artists

★★★★½

The Twilight Saga: Eclipse
Original Motion Picture
Soundtrack *Atlantic*

Indie all-stars deliver on third
Twilight soundtrack



The third *Twilight* soundtrack mostly reprises its predecessors' mix of strong songs and romantic washouts (see Muse's hilariously grandiose "Neutron Star Collision (Love Is Forever)," which sounds like Radiohead covering Journey). It's fun to hear A-list rockers tweak their sound: Vampire Weekend seem particularly heated on the sweeping "Jonathan Low," and Cee Lo Green delivers the New Wave charmer "What Part of Forever" in a clipped, breathy croon. Among the other winners is the Dead Weather's creepy "Rolling in on a Burning Tire," which has the added benefit of introducing tweens to real-life vampire Jack White.

CHRISTIAN HOARD

Key Tracks: "Jonathan Low," "What Part of Forever"

Various Artists

★★★★½

Fela! – Original Broadway
Cast Recording

Knitting Factory

Cool versions of Fela classics
(but start with the real thing)



This soundtrack to the musical about the late Nigerian political activist and inventor of Afrobeat is a powerful Fela primer. It includes some of Fela Kuti's best-known songs ("I.T.T.," "Zombie"), as well as adapted material (like "Trouble Sleep," sung beautifully from the perspective of his dead mother). The band (Antibalas) reproduces Fela's mix of jazz, funk and Yoruba rhythms, and actor Sahr Ngaujah brings him back to life. Still, there's no substitute for the real thing – for that, start with the 2005 collection *The Best of the Black President*.

M.K.

Key Tracks: "I.T.T.," "Trouble Sleep," "Zombie"

Robert Randolph and the Family Band ★★★½

We Walk This Road

Warner Bros.

Steel-guitar master finds
religion with T Bone Burnett



Hooking up with the jam-band scene may have been the worst thing Robert Randolph could have done. Though amazing live, he has never recorded a great album – until now. Randolph puts overcooked funk on the back burner and offers up his specialty: pure gospel spiced with steel guitar. Producer T Bone Burnett works subtly, using old samples of standards like "Traveling Shoes" as segues into Randolph's songs, and Randolph finds the sweet, soulful spot covering tunes by three rock legends: Bob Dylan ("Shot of Love"), Prince ("Walk Don't Walk") and John Lennon ("I Don't Wanna Be a Soldier Mama").

M.K.

Key Tracks: "Shot of Love," "If I Had My Way," "Walk Don't Walk"

The Steve Miller Band ★★★BINGO! *Roadrunner*

After nearly two decades, the
Gangster of Love is back



On his first studio album in 17 years, Steve Miller returns to his blues roots but gives *BINGO!* the slick party-pop vibe of classic Miller albums like *The Joker* and *Fly Like an Eagle*. With singer Sonny Charles of the Checkmates, Miller and the band beef up bar-blues warhorses like "Rock Me Baby." He puts his own mellow voice to spacier, early-Fleetwood-Mac-like takes on songs such as Otis Rush's "All Your Love (I Miss Loving)" and veers into schmaltziness on the R&B duet "Sweet Soul Vibe." Miller doesn't say anything here that he hasn't said before, but hardcore fans will be glad he's saying anything at all.

M.K.

Key Tracks: "All Your Love (I Miss Loving)," "Who's Been Talkin'?"

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G-rated
language,
you're
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hungry.



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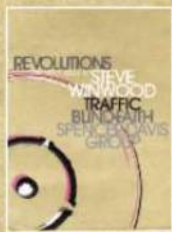


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REVIEWS MUSIC

Josh Ritter

★★★★½

So Runs the World Away
Pytheas

**Idaho soft-rocker courts
darkness on sixth album**



"Black hole," sings Josh Ritter, "are your eyes as empty as they look?" A decade after topping a new school of singer-songwriters, Ritter hit a creative wall, and his latest is the sound of him kicking through it. The above is from "Rattling Locks," maybe his gnarliest song ever, feedback guitar stalking a morose bass-clarinet line. "Folk Bloodbath" mixes Mississippi John Hurt, Johnny Cash and the legend of Stack-lee, and ends up in a graveyard. Ritter's verse is by turns trippy and goofy: "The Curse" is a parlor-room ballad about a mummy and a hot anthropologist. Even at his darkest, love knows no boundaries. **WILL HERMES**

Key Tracks: "Rattling Locks," "The Curse," "Folk Bloodbath"

The Chemical Brothers

★★★★

Further *Astralwerks*

**British dance duo stay
sharp but mellow out**



The Chemical Brothers' seventh disc is as relaxed as you can expect from two guys who still routinely blast arena-size electronica to throbbing masses. *Further* manages to be both pretty and hard-grooving: "Snow" sets sweetly melodic murmurs over gently billowing synths, and "K+D+B" is soft, repetitive synth rock that has no destination in mind. "Dissolve" rides a simple synth line toward groove nirvana, although its relative plainness means it doesn't do much for you when your body is at rest. **C.H.**

Key Tracks: "Swoon," "Snow," "K+D+B"

Ozzy Osbourne

★★★★

Scream *Epic*

**The Lord of Darkness
misses solid sideman**



Ozzy Osbourne usually rises or falls to the level of his guitarists. He invented metal with Tony Iommi and wrote some of its greatest anthems with Randy Rhoads—but things went downhill when Zakk Wylde joined the band in 1988. Replacing Wylde is a 29-year-old Greek clone named Gus G. He's got chops and shows them off on songs like "Time," but producer Kevin Churko has processed his riffs to the point that they sound like generic "active rock." It's a shame, because Ozzy shows signs of life on the six-minute "Diggin' Me Down" and on "Crucify," where he compares himself to Jesus. **ANDY GREENE**

Key Tracks: "Diggin' Me Down," "Crucify"

22-20s

★★★★

Shake/Shiver/Moan *TBD*

**Early '00s blues rockers
reinvent their retro**



This U.K. group's 2004 debut was then-trendy blues punk, the kind of sound a band can mine every year or so until it splits up or gets some new influences. Weirdly, both of those things happened. It's taken a breakup and reunion for the 22-20s to record a follow-up, and now you can hear Sixties psych rock and Nineties Brit pop in their sound. They're best when their throwbacks clash; "Ocean" is the best Byrds tune Oasis never wrote, and on "Let It Go," singer Martin Trimble does a great stoned, ruffle-sleeved Bono. **JON DOLAN**

Key Tracks: "Ocean," "Let It Go"

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The Black Keys

Brothers *Nonesuch*

Blues-garage duo Dan Auerbach and Patrick Carney duck into Muscle Shoals and emerge with their sharpest album yet. Key track: the ferocious "Tighten Up."

Janelle Monáe

The ArchAndroid

*Bad Boy/Wondaland
Arts Society*

A freaky funk-soul project that has to be heard to be believed: James Brown comes back from the future as a woman, bearing a concept album based on Fritz Lang's *Metropolis*. Start with this, but definitely see Monáe live.

Otis Redding

Live on the Sunset

Strip Stax

These 1966 recordings from L.A.'s Whisky don't quite have the excitement of Redding's Monterey Pop set, but they make up for it with aching intimacy and cool cover songs.

Tracey Thorn

★★★★

Love and Its Opposite

Merge

**Everything But the Girl gal
serenades middle age**



"Who's next? Always the ones that you least expect," coos Tracey Thorn on "Oh, the Divorces!," a Satie-esque piano waltz begging to score the next Noah Baumbach film. The sad-sack English indie-pop-heroine-turned-literary-house-diva has returned to her roots as a solo act, singing to a daughter in the chipper "Hormones" ("Yours are just kicking in/ Mine are just checking out") and to a peer on the heart-piercing "Singles Bar." Ladies will find her POV spot-on; dudes stand to learn a lot. **W.H.**

Key Tracks: "Hormones," "Oh, the Divorces!"

Working-Class Heroes: The Gaslight Anthem Turn It Up

Brian Fallon creates his own 'Jungland' on third disc

The Gaslight Anthem

★★★★½

American Slang *SideOneDummy*



Brian Fallon of New Jersey punk band the Gaslight Anthem grew up in Springsteen Country – one of his boyhood homes was four blocks from

E Street. The 30-year-old singer (and former carpenter) is at once totally earnest and supercharming – the type of guy who'd help you work on your car and then tell you his life story over a six-pack.

Gaslight's first two records were soulful punk albums that brought recovering emo kids and middle-aged dads into the fold. *American Slang* arrives with serious advance buzz: The choruses are more sculpted, but the band's tough-as-leather rush is as hard as ever, and Fallon howls so hard, he sounds like he's aiming to get a section of the Jersey Turnpike named after him. Fallon's characters are the kind who often



True grit: Gaslight

populate working-class anthems: "Boxer" is about a creative type who gets beaten up in the ring and in his head, and "The Queen of Lower Chelsea" is populated by desperate hustlers and rich girls losing themselves in the big city. *American Slang* can feel forced, as if Fallon is searching for meaning just beyond his fingertips. But when he attaches his howl to a first-class tune, he's unstoppable: "The Diamond Church Street Choir" is a bouncy number about the power of music with a touch of Billy Joel cheese. Like Fallon's best tunes, it treads the line between sublime and a little silly – and hits you right in the gut.

CHRISTIAN HOARD

Key Tracks:
"The Diamond Church Street Choir," "Boxer"

Deer Tick ★★½

The Black Dirt Sessions

Partisan

Americana up-and-comers need to dial it back



Deer Tick's John McCauley has a wobbly voice and a woblier

sense of self. "Raindrops like bullets on my fragile skin/Insecurities I've had are creeping within," he croaks on "Twenty Miles" over chiming guitar and swelling backing vocals. Like all the songs on *The Black Dirt Sessions*, "Twenty Miles" is pretty, atmospheric – and too self-serious. *Dirt* has more mood pieces than songs, and the lyrics get just plain goofy. "Like a heart that's hung in the sky," he sings in "Christ Jesus," "The hard-on when I die."

J.R.

Key Tracks: "Sad Sun," "Blood Moon"

Sarah McLachlan ★★

Laws of Illusion *Arista*

Queen of Lilith tour needs hug on her sixth album



Breakups tend to bring out the best and worst in singer-song-

writers. Unfortunately, Sarah McLachlan's first disc since splitting from her husband, Ashwin Sood, feels scattered: The care-free single "Loving You Is Easy" feels out of place. The rest alternates between vulnerability and bitterness, using the same sighs and moans with which she used to convey ecstasy. Producer Pierre Marchand strips away the gauzy instrumental layers of her old discs, but without them, her heavy-handedness is exposed.

BARRY WALTERS

Key Tracks: "Loving You Is Easy," "Rivers of Love"

Dierks Bentley

★★★★

Up on the Ridge

Capitol Nashville

Handsome country rule-breaker goes bluegrass



Country hunk Dierks Bentley's sixth album is an excursion into

bluegrass, which jettisons his usual power chords and booming choruses in favor of sawing fiddles and coal-miner ballads. His voice is too plain to deliver the pathos in songs like Buddy Miller's "Love Grows Wild." But the record succeeds on high spirits, sterling guest stars (Miranda Lambert, Jamey Johnson) and covers like U2's "Pride (In the Name of Love)" – a choice that might scandalize bluegrass fans, even as they tap their feet.

JODY ROSEN

Key Tracks: "Up on the Ridge," "Bottle to the Bottom"



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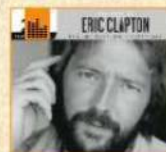
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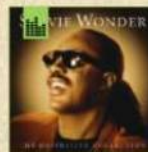
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REVIEWS MUSIC

Jackson Browne and David Lindley

★★★★½

Love Is Strange *Inside*

Songwriter revisits hits with crack acoustic band



Here's an album to please the fans who didn't follow Jackson

Browne on his Eighties de-tour into fight-the-power songs. This two-disc live set, cut in Spain in 2006 with stringed-instrument maestro David Lindley, revisits gems from Browne's Laurel Canyon heyday and highlights choice later stuff, like the haunting, oud-framed "Looking East." Browne's voice has barely aged, and Lindley's liquid slide is exquisite; versions often rival the originals. Spanish friends add shine – like Luz Casal, whose reading of "These Days" echoes that of Browne's late lover Nico. **WILL HERMES**

Key Tracks: "Late for the Sky," "Looking East"

Macy Gray

★★★★

The Sellout *Concord*

Wheezy soul mama balances pop, freakiness



Like Erykah Badu's kooky big sis, Macy Gray has been balancing

freakiness and mainstream shine since 1999. Despite the title, her new album is a softer sell – and more appealing – than 2007's Will.i.am-assisted *Big*. "Beauty in the World" is viral, hand-clap-powered gospel folk; there's a surprisingly fun Velvet Revolver collab, and a Bobby Brown duet nearly as good as her classic jam with Ol' Dirty. Fact is, with her sexy oddball rasp, she generates more heat selling out than gettin' freaky. And we love freaks. **W.H.**

Key Tracks: "The Sellout," "The Comeback," "Stalker"

Truth and Salvage Co.

★★★★½

Truth and Salvage Co.

Silver Arrow/Megaforce

Californians take their Band jones to new places



"Hail Hail" opens this strong debut with every-

thing you need for a classic-rock party: muscular-treble guitar, Hammond organ and four singer-songwriters harmonizing about "heads full of reefer." This sly California sextet draw on irresistible history (Buffalo Springfield, the Band) to spell out the modern trials of peace and love. Chris Robinson of the Black Crowes produced the album; Katy Perry helped write "Old Piano." But Truth and Salvage Co. have what it takes for a long haul, in the country-R.E.M. breeze of "101" and saloon glow of "She Really Does It for Me." **DAVID FRICKE**

Key Tracks: "She Really Does It for Me," "101"

The Cure

★★★★½

REISSUE

Disintegration:

Deluxe Edition *Rhino*

A New Wave sad-guy classic gets supersized



The Cure's 1989 masterpiece gave goth its *Dark Side of the*

Moon – an alienated opus from a tortured star that only deepened his fame. Robert Smith translated the gloom of their gory early-Eighties records into sweeping stadium rock on great, woozy singles ("Love Song," "Pictures of You"), but their heart lies in towering black-gray ballads. Two extra discs (one of demos, one of live songs) are pretty worthless, but the album's tension between masochistic experiment and big pop still blazes. **JON DOLAN**

Key Tracks: "Lullaby," "Pictures of You"

Karen Elson

★★★

The Ghost Who Walks

Third Man/XL

Ms. Jack White gets her roots on for debut



It'd be easy to dismiss a record by Jack White's British model wife

released on his label as a vanity project. But they've come up with a sexy synthesis of Weimar chanteuse pop, trip-hop, Dusty Springfield and forlorn alt-country. Elson is in avant-cabaret troupe the Citizens Band, and she has duetted with Cat Power; sometimes she sings like a talented backup singer, tasteful and versatile if not a huge personality. White, who produces and plays drums, helps by creating a cozy family vibe (Meg White's husband plays guitar, Dead Weather's Jack Lawrence is on bass). A few songs even throb like good ol' White Stripes roots metal. **J.D.**

Key Tracks: "The Ghost Who Walks," "Garden"

Rooney ★★

Eureka *California Dreamin'*

L.A. pop-rock guys don't quite pull off sad

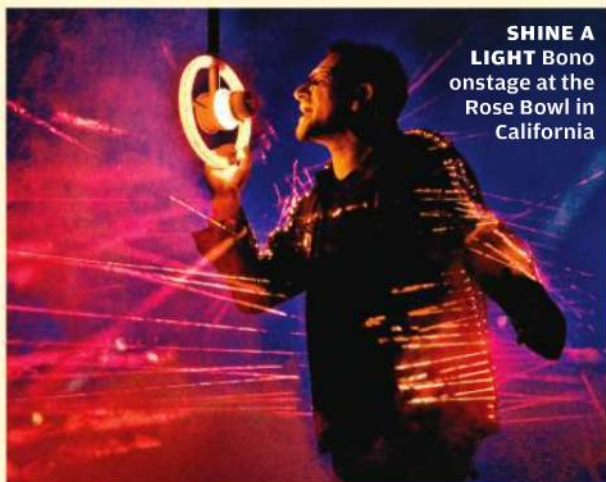


On their self-released third album, Rooney mix

West Coast catchiness with a sense of unrest. Over music that flits between Weezer and the Eagles, Robert Schwartzman sings about alienation ("Only Friend") and being a jobless schlub ("Don't Look at Me"). His best asset is his gift for breezy melodies, but *Eureka*'s lyrics sag: The softly political "Stars and Stripes" ("There's nobody left to take the blame/We're all gonna have to take it together") sounds like a lite-rock parody of "Waiting on the World to Change." **CHRISTIAN HOARD**

Key Tracks: "I Can't Get Enough," "Only Friend"

DVDS



SHINE A LIGHT Bono onstage at the Rose Bowl in California

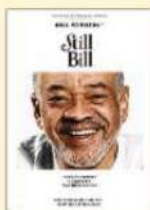


U2 360° at the Rose Bowl

★★★★ Mercury

This was released to coincide with the latest North American leg of U2's world tour, but thanks to Bono's back injury and canceled dates, it will have to serve as a substitute. Luckily, it's a stunning concert film shot by 27 high-definition cameras, documenting the epic scale of the band's monstrous clawlike stage at the second-to-last show of its fall 2009 tour. The sound is crisp and detailed; new songs such as the closing "Moment of Surrender" feel like they've been reinvented in this setting.

BARRY WALTERS



Still Bill ★★★★★

Late Night and Weekends

Bill Withers was installing toilets on airplanes when his "Ain't No Sunshine" hit the 1971 charts; he would go on to record soul classics such as "Lean on Me" and "Lovely Day," until, struggling with the record biz, he dropped out and dedicated himself to raising his family. This intimate doc captures his tentative steps out of retirement, as well as his 70th birthday. Sting and Dr. Cornel West put in cameos, but it's the down-home dignity of this unlikely star that makes this doc special.

B.W.



Velvet Underground: Vanishing Point ★★★★★

United States of Distribution

This British doc on rock's most influential cult band didn't have the participation of Lou Reed and John Cale, but it's stylish and scholarly, weaving a colorful yarn from interviews with drummer Maureen Tucker, bassist Doug Yule, Factory photographer Billy Name and other insiders. Vintage footage - including clips from the band's Andy Warhol years - capture VU at the intersection of rock and avant-garde art.

B.W.



When You're Strange: A Film About the Doors

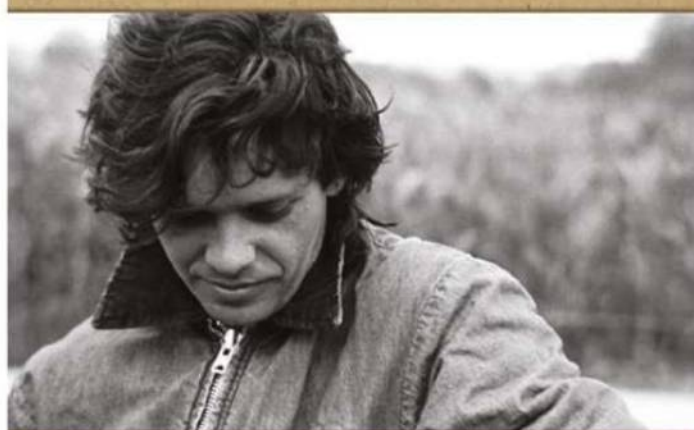
★★★★ Eagle Rock Entertainment

This mesmerizing montage of archival concert, rehearsal and backstage clips - combined with footage from the Doors' experimental films and narration by Johnny Depp - manages to be both dreamlike and utterly real. What stands out is Jim Morrison's pure charisma and performance chops: When he looks at the *Ed Sullivan Show* camera like a lover and sings "Girl, we couldn't get much higher" in defiance of network executives, he is rock & roll incarnate.

B.W.

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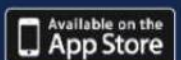
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Movies

BY PETER TRAVERS



**TOO CLOSE
FOR COMFORT**
Reilly watches
Tomei mother Hill.
Below: The T-shirt.

Comedy Three-way

John C. Reilly comes between Marisa Tomei and her son, Jonah Hill, in a kinky laugh riot

Cyrus ★★★★★^{1/2}

John C. Reilly, Jonah Hill and Marisa Tomei

Directed by Duplass brothers

IT'S OUTRAGEOUS, TWISTED fun when boy meets girl, plus one. Divorced, depressed John, played with impeccable comic timing by John C. Reilly, having just made a drunken ass of himself at an L.A. garden party, staggers into the bushes to pee. Enter Molly, played with an irresistible blend of humor, heart and hotness by Marisa Tomei, having just taken a peek at this strange guy enjoying a blissful stream of urinary release. "Nice penis," she says, smiling and walking on. Even John, who's never got-

ten over his about-to-remarry ex-wife (the sublime Catherine Keener), knows you don't let a girl like Molly get away. There is an obstacle. Single Molly has a 21-year-old son (Jonah Hill) named Cyrus. And *close* doesn't begin to describe their relationship. The T-shirt the studio is marketing with the movie speaks volumes for Cyrus: SERIOUSLY, DON'T F**K MY MOM.

Welcome to the brilliantly bizarro world of the Duplass brothers, Mark and Jay, champions of DIY filmmaking and leaders of mumblecore, a movement of microbudget indie films shot digitally with unknown actors who improvise talk, talk, talk to get at the emotions their educated, aimless characters can't articulate. The Duplass brothers, known for their short films (best intro is *This Is John*, in which Mark Duplass slaves for seven minutes to get his an-

swering-machine message just right), have contributed two splendidly quirky features to mumblecore, *The Puffy Chair* and *Baghead*.

Cyrus is not a DIY film. The Duplass bros are flying with studio financing, major actors, technical finesse and buzz from sold-out previews at the Sundance and South by Southwest film fests. But no way have the guys gone Hollywood. Their approach remains character-based, and their wit – demented as it is – never breaks the bonds of our shared humanity.

Molly tries to keep John away from her son. It's John who knocks on the door to find the home-schooled, housebound sonny boy, a New Age musician with his own synth-pop studio. Hill knocks the role out of the park, nailing every nuance, comic, tender and scary. The *eww* factor kicks in when Cyrus saunters into the bathroom where his mom is show-

ering and closes the door. You may fear for John's life when he spends the night.

It's more likely you'll be laughing till it hurts. In a multiplex crowded with formula rom-coms divorced from genuine feeling (that's you, *Sex and the Shitty*), *Cyrus* brims over with hilarity and heartbreak. Cheers to the Duplass brothers for encouraging the actors to fill in the outlines of the script with their own grit and grace notes. Hill, Reilly and Tomei could not be better, riffing off each other like skilled jazz musicians in their portrayals of characters who are damaged goods. *Cyrus*, the summer's best, most original and crazily inventive comedy, is potentially funny and painfully real.

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CHUCK ZLOTNICK/FOX SEARCHLIGHT

SERIOUSLY,
DON'T F**K
MY MOM.

CYRUS

★★★★ Classic | ★★★★★^{1/2} Excellent | ★★★ Good | ★★ Fair | ★ Poor

The Killer Inside Me ★★★

Casey Affleck, Jessica Alba and Kate Hudson

Directed by Michael Winterbottom

CASEY AFFLECK HAS SEX with Jessica Alba and Kate Hudson. Not together. This isn't that kind of movie. It's far more disturbing, since Affleck spans, bites, beats and punches each lady senseless with his gloved fists. They seem to love the guy anyway. "Don't worry, sweetheart," he murmurs, "it'll be over soon." For this, the film's British director, Michael Winterbottom (*A Mighty Heart*, *24 Hour Party People*), has been labeled a piece of woman-hating pervert scum. Such criticisms, of course, ignore the fact that Winterbottom isn't getting his rocks off, but rather directing the film version of *The Killer Inside Me*, an acclaimed piece of 1952 pulp fiction that helped make the reputation of novelist Jim Thompson (*The Grifters*; *After Dark, My Sweet*). No less a film icon than Stanley Kubrick called the novel "probably the most chilling and believable first-person story of a criminally warped mind I have ever encountered."

That mind is also the subject of Winterbottom's dazzling, depraved film noir. If you can't take the heat, stay out of Winterbottom's scalding kitchen. Affleck gives a mesmeric, implosively powerful performance as Lou Ford, a Texas deputy sheriff so low-key and soft-spoken no one would suspect the evil thoughts dancing in his head. No one except Joyce (Alba), the hooker who caters to his needs, and Amy (Hudson), the girl he wants to marry. Objections might be raised about having two female characters who seem to welcome abuse at the hands of a man. This discounts the fact that on page and screen we are seeing things through the eyes of a madman. John Curran's script can be faulted for leaning too heavily on the childhood roots of Lou's psychosis, but the movie does Thompson proud. It's a scorcher.



KILLER SEX Casey Affleck lays a hand on Kate Hudson.



ROCKERS Hill and Diddy can't handle Brand.

Joan Rivers: A Piece of Work

★★★★½

Directed by Ricki Stern and Annie Sundberg

JOAN RIVERS IS A COMIC force of nature, and this no-bull documentary offers a profanely hilarious peek into the 75th year of her life, on the road and off. Fasten your seat belts. The idea of Rivers slowing down is not something this so-called "piece of work" subscribes to. Co-directors Ricki Stern and Annie Sundberg, best known for their doc on Darfur genocide (*The Devil Came on Horseback*), insert flashbacks into the high and low points of a turbulent career, including her feud with Johnny Carson, the suicide of her producer husband, Edgar, and her desire to work until she or her plastic surgeon drops. At home – in a posh Manhattan apartment Marie Antoinette would have lived in, Rivers says, "if she had money" – the comic shows us her copious files of jokes for any occasion and a support staff she financially supports in return. Though the movie presents Rivers working clubs, trying



FUNNY LADY Joan Rivers shows her serious side.

out a play about her life in London, hawking goods on QVC and winning a tough season on Donald Trump's *Celebrity Apprentice*, Rivers is perpetually on the hustle for her next gig. Despite her unshakable bond with daughter Melissa and grandson Cooper, Rivers allows us to see the loneliness that seeps in around the edges of her life. As ever, she laughs it off. Self-pity is a no-no. For those who know Rivers only from her red-carpet interviews, this doc will be a revelation. Rivers is more than a pioneering funny lady who paved the way for the likes of Kathy Griffin and Sarah Silverman. Her wit cuts as sharp as one of her diamonds, her observations as acute and timely as those of Jon Stewart and Sacha Baron Cohen. Rivers' renegade spirit animates this movie. There's not a timid, sympathy-begging minute in it. Even better, you leave *Joan Rivers: A Piece of Work* with the exhilarating feeling that the lady is just hitting her stride.

Get Him to the Greek ★★

Russell Brand, Jonah Hill
Directed by Nicholas Stoller

BEFORE IT GOES OFF THE rails into strained sermonizing, this sorta-sequel to 2008's delightful *Forgetting Sarah Marshall* gets in big laughs. Bad boy supreme Russell Brand is back as Aldous Snow, the Brit rocker whose addictions merely start with sex and drugs. Jonah Hill also returns, strangely not as Matthew the waiter but as Aaron the junior record exec. Aaron's boss (a sidesplitting Sean Combs) charges him with getting Aldous from London to the Greek Theatre in L.A. for a comeback concert. Complications ensue. Don't they always? The big miss here is Jason Segel, who wrote and starred in *Sarah Marshall*. Director Nicholas Stoller takes over the screenplay chores, letting the air out of Segel's balloon. Making Aldous regret his wicked ways is a buzz-kill of major proportions.



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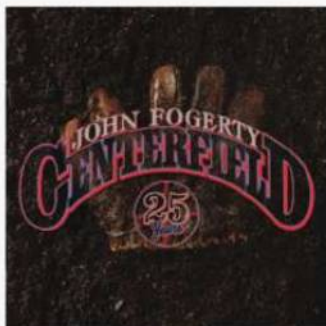
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JAY-Z

[Cont. from 47] his voice – a probation thing, where the psychiatrist gave him tea that made him sleepy and asked him questions like, "Who are your best friends?" He acknowledges that his famously even temperament – the Obama-esque perpetual cool – might not be the healthiest approach to life in every circumstance. "I don't get too excited about things, and I don't get too down about things," he says. "I feel like, at the end of the day, everything balances out, like stocks. But I may be cheating myself out of real joyous celebration."

Jay insists that he can be revealing in songs. "I have my moments," he says. But when pushed to give examples, he points to Nineties tracks like "Regrets," "Lucky Me" and "You Must Love Me," all from his first two albums. If, musically, Jay continues to push himself into "rarefied air," as he seems determined to do, it will be interesting to see if these journeys into uncharted territories will ever include more self-exposure. This month, he'll release a greatest-hits album, and the tracks include some of the most memorable pop songs of the past 15 years. But, as in much of hip-hop, Jay's lyrics, for all of the brilliance of his wordplay, can begin to feel like tedious self-branding, exercises in image-building as unrelenting as political-campaign ads. It's like watching one of those television specials that collect the greatest commercials of all time. You can sit back and enjoy the cleverness and artistry – but at the end of the day, you're still being sold a bar of soap.

One promising development on this front is Jay's acknowledged interest in indie rock. This latest extra-genre dabbling comes after earlier explorations of rap rock (in 2004, he made the album *Collision Course* with Linkin Park) and jam bands (also in 2004, he joined Phish on-stage during a show in Coney Island), and while the fascination with indie bands suggests his taste in music white people like is steadily improving,

it also hints at what sort of music he might be interested in making in the future. "I love the energy coming out of indie rock right now," he says. "It has this rebellion thing that hip-hop is missing now, the thing that made hip-hop hip-hop. A band like Grizzly Bear is actually trying *not* to make a big, relatable sound – and that ends up attracting people, because everyone loves rebellion. 'Fuck you, this is what we're doing over here, and that's it.'"

"The thing I'm trying to learn now," Jay says, "is to pull it back and be a bit more of a selfish performer. When I perform, I'm always trying to look for energy, and I'm not necessarily playing everything I want to play. But I want to be able to play a song like 'Allure' [from *The Black Album*] – I don't care who knows it! It's a beautiful song to me."

Our dinner begins to wind down. Jay has a meeting the next day with Russian billionaire Mikhail Prokhorov, the majority owner of the Nets. The first time he met with Prokhorov was at the Four Seasons. "I'd been staying there for 10 years, and I always thought I was at the top level," Jay says. "But when I met Prokhorov, they took me up to this *extra extra* room that even I had never heard of before." He smiles, mock-rueful. It is not the smile of a man who will be recording an acoustic covers album in a church, or releasing a split-single with Japanther, or even performing "Allure" live anytime soon. "Now there's something else to shoot for," Jay says. "There's always an extra level you don't know about." **75**

ROLLING STONE (ISSN 0035-791X) is published biweekly except for the first issue in July and at year's end, when two issues are combined and published as double issues, by Wenner Media LLC, 1290 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10104-0298. The entire contents of ROLLING STONE are copyright © 2010 by ROLLING STONE LLC, and may not be reproduced in any manner, either in whole or in part, without written permission. All rights are reserved. Canadian Goods and Service Tax Registration No. R125041855. International Publications Mail Sales Product Agreement No. 450553. The subscription price is \$39.96 for one year. The Canadian subscription price is \$52.00 for one year, including GST, payable in advance. Canadian Postmaster: Send address changes and returns to P.O. Box 63, Malton CFC, Mississauga, Ontario L4T 3B5. The foreign subscription price is \$80.00 for one year, payable in advance. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY, and additional mailing offices. Canada Post publication agreement #40683192. Postmaster: Send address changes to ROLLING STONE Customer Service, P.O. Box 6003, Harlan, IA 51593-1503.

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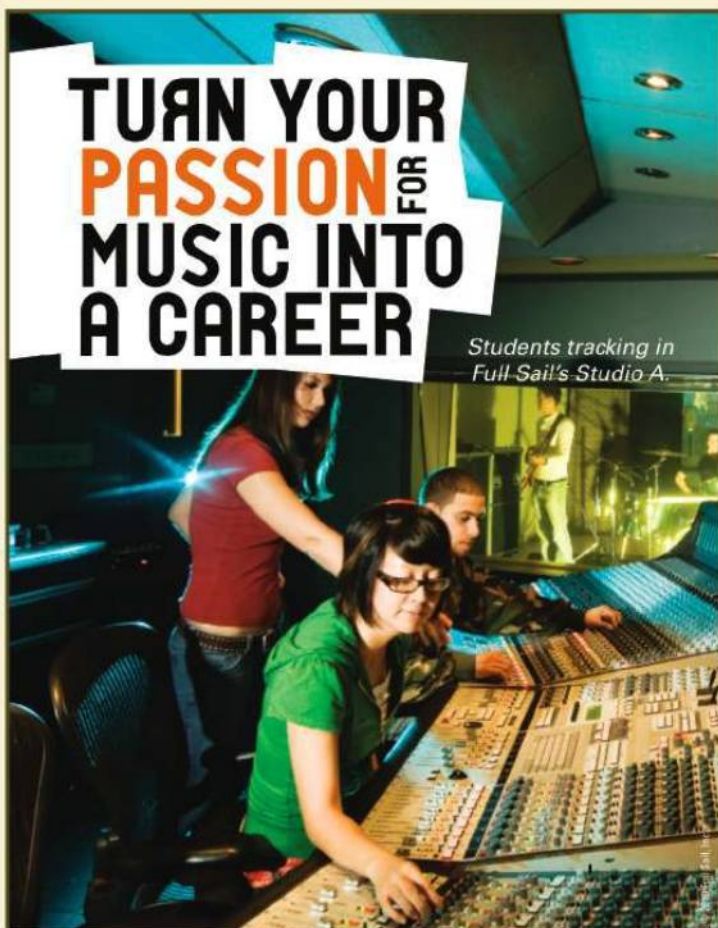


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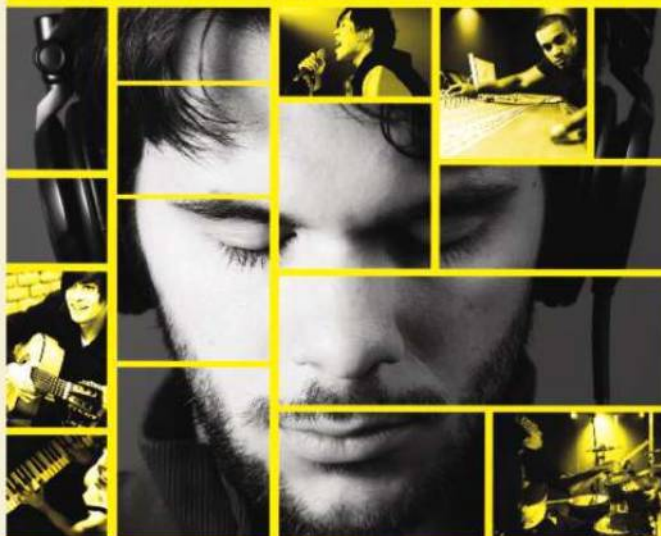
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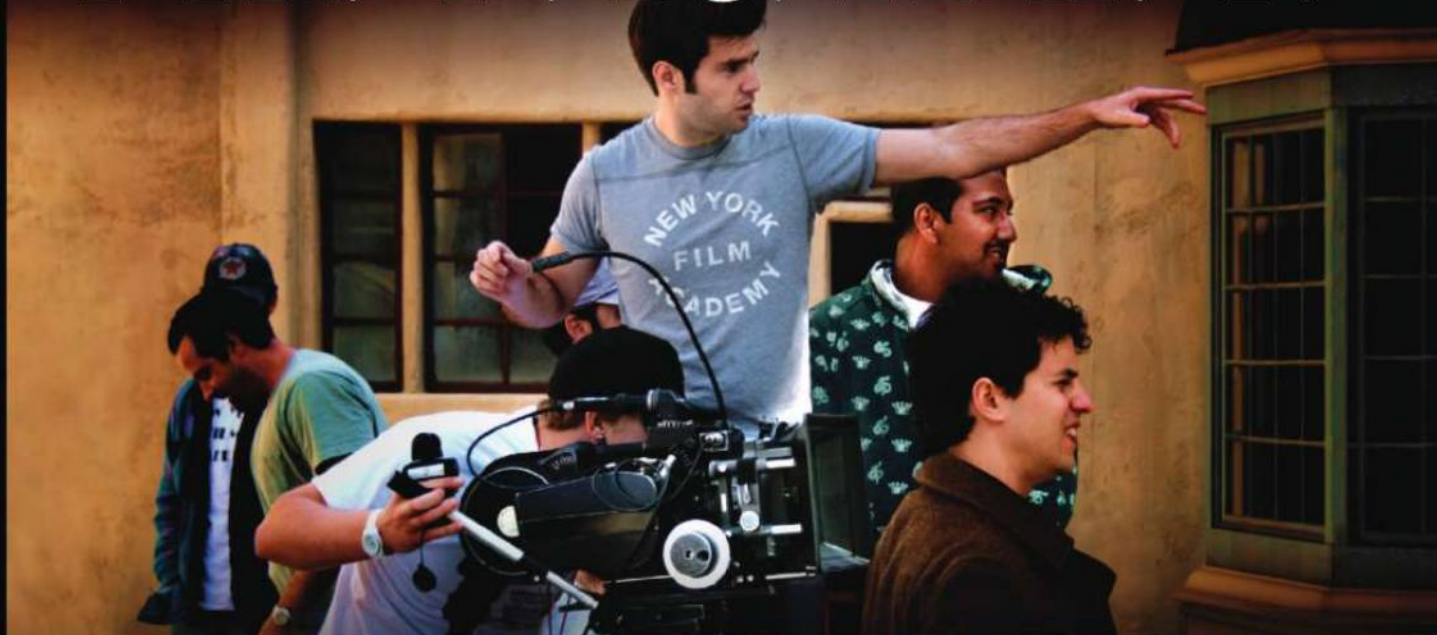
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iTunes TOP 10 SONGS

- Katy Perry**
"California Gurls" - Capitol
- B.o.B**
"Airplanes" - Rebel Rock/
Grand Hustle/Atlantic
- Usher**
"OMG" - LaFace/Jive
- Ke\$ha**
"Your Love Is My Drug" -
Kemosabe/RCA
- Eminem**
"Not Afraid" - Shady/Aftermath
- Lady Gaga**
"Alejandro" - Streamline/KonLive/
Cherrytree/Interscope
- La Roux**
"Bulletproof" - Polydor/Universal
- 'Glee' Cast**
"Poker Face" - 20th Century Fox TV/
Columbia
- Travis McCoy**
"Billionaire" - Fueled by Ramen
- Taio Cruz**
"Break Your Heart" - Island

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COLLEGE RADIO TOP 10 ALBUMS

- LCD Soundsystem**
This Is Happening - DFA/Virgin
- Broken Social Scene**
Forgiveness Rock Record -
Arts and Crafts
- The Black Keys**
Brothers - Nonesuch
- New Pornographers**
Together - Matador
- The National**
High Violet - 4AD
- Caribou**
Swim - Merge
- The Dead Weather**
Sea of Cowards - Third Man
- The Hold Steady**
Heaven Is Whenever - Vagrant
- Flying Lotus**
Cosmogramma - Warp
- Crystal Castles**
Crystal Castles II - Polydor/
Universal Motown



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Top 40 Albums

- 1** **Glee: The Music**
Season 1, Volume 3: Showstoppers -
20th Century Fox TV/Columbia
- 2** **NEW** **Stone Temple Pilots**
Stone Temple Pilots - Atlantic
- 3** **4** **Justin Bieber**
My World 2.0 - RBMG/Island
- 4** **6** **Lady Antebellum**
Need You Now - Capitol Nashville
- 5** **8** **Usher**
Raymond v Raymond - LaFace/Jive
- 6** **12** **Lady Gaga**
The Fame - Streamline/KonLive/Cherrytree/
Interscope
- 7** **2** **The Rolling Stones**
Exile on Main Street - Rolling Stones/
Universal Republic
- 8** **3** **The Black Keys**
Brothers - Nonesuch
- 9** **11** **Carole King and James Taylor**
Live at the Troubadour - Hear
- 10** **5** **Nas and Damian Marley**
Distant Relatives - Ghetto Youths/Def Jam/
Universal Republic
- 11** **NEW** **Marc Anthony**
Iconos - Sony Music Latin
- 12** **13** **Godsmack**
The Oracle - Universal Republic
- 13** **NEW** **Sex and the City 2**
The Soundtrack - WaterTower Music
- 14** **9** **AC/DC**
Iron Man 2 (Soundtrack) - Columbia
- 15** **16** **NOW 33**
Various Artists - Universal/EMI/Sony Music
- 16** **14** **B.o.B**
B.o.B Presents: The Adventures of
Bobby Ray - Rebel Rock/Grand Hustle/
Atlantic
- 17** **20** **Ke\$ha**
Animal - Kemosabe/RCA
- 18** **68** **Brooks and Dunn**
#1s... and Then Some - Arista Nashville
- 19** **22** **Zac Brown Band**
The Foundation - Roar/Bigger Picture/
Home Grown/Atlantic
- 20** **NEW** **Hank III**
Rebel Within - Curb
- 21** **19** **Justin Bieber**
My World (EP) - RBMG/Island
- 22** **23** **Black Eyed Peas**
The E.N.D. - Will.I.Am/Interscope
- 23** **7** **Band of Horses**
Infinite Arms - Brown/Fat Possum/Columbia
- 24** **35** **Carrie Underwood**
Play On - 19/Arista Nashville
- 25** **25** **Miranda Lambert**
Revolution - Columbia (Nashville)
- 26** **26** **Lady Gaga**
The Fame Monster (EP) - Streamline/
KonLive/Cherrytree/Interscope
- 27** **NEW** **Widespread Panic**
Dirty Side Down - ATO
- 28** **15** **The National**
High Violet - 4AD
- 29** **30** **Michael Bublé**
Crazy Love - 143/Reprise
- 30** **37** **Alicia Keys**
The Element of Freedom - MBK/J
- 31** **24** **Court Yard Hounds**
Court Yard Hounds - Columbia
- 32** **NEW** **Wynonna**
Love Heals - Cracker Barrel
- 33** **32** **Ludacris**
Battle of the Sexes - DTP/Def Jam
- 34** **34** **Taylor Swift**
Fearless - Big Machine
- 35** **40** **Nickelback**
Dark Horse - Roadrunner
- 36** **21** **Glee: The Music**
The Power of Madonna (EP) -
20th Century Fox TV/Columbia
- 37** **NEW** **Leela James**
My Soul - Stax
- 38** **10** **LCD Soundsystem**
This Is Happening - DFA/Virgin
- 39** **33** **Deftones**
Diamond Eyes - Reprise
- 40** **17** **Janelle Monáe**
The ArchAndroid: Suites II and III -
Bad Boy/Wondaland Arts Society



Don't Stop Believin'

The third LP from the hit series - featuring Lady Gaga, Aerosmith and Beatles cuts sung by the show's cast - sold 199,000 copies in two weeks.



Grunge Returns

STP's first album in nearly a decade sold 62,000 copies its first week out. It's the Nineties survivors' sixth LP - and all of them debuted in the Top 10.



Black Keys Break

After eight years, the Akron blues-rock duo have connected with a wide audience. Their sixth LP has sold a career-high 99,000 copies over two weeks.



Still Jammin'

Hippie rockers Widespread Panic have always sold more tickets than CDs. But their latest LP debuted at Number 27, a record high for the band.

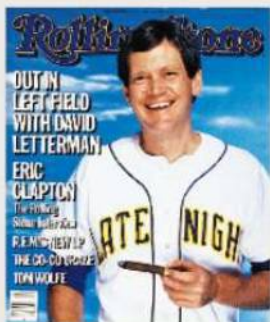
OO Chart position on June 2nd, 2010
 OO Chart position on May 26th, 2010
 NEW New Entry
 2ND Re-Entry
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From the Vault

RS 450, June 20th, 1985

TOP 10 SINGLES

- Bryan Adams**
"Heaven" - A&M
- Phil Collins**
"Sussudio" - Atlantic
- Tears for Fears**
"Everybody Wants to Rule the World" - Mercury
- Prince and the New Power Generation**
"Raspberry Beret" - Paisley Park
- Duran Duran**
"A View to a Kill" - Capitol
- Madonna**
"Angel" - Sire
- Mary Jane Girls**
"In My House" - Gordy
- Howard Jones**
"Things Can Only Get Better" - Elektra
- Katrina and the Waves**
"Walking on Sunshine" - Capitol
- Survivor**
"The Search Is Over" - Scotti Brothers



On the Cover

"I like being on at 12:30. The audience is smaller. That's where I've been my whole life. In school I was never with the smart kids, or the good-looking kids. There was a small pocket of people I hung out with, and we made fun of the good-looking and the smart kids."
 —David Letterman

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